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ABSTRACT

This study guide was developed for teachers and students participating in the Peace Corps World Wise Schools program. The primary purpose of the study guide series is to enhance each class's correspondence with its Peace Corps Volunteer and to help students gain a greater understanding of regions and cultures different from their own. The specific purpose of this guide on Lesotho is to support these aims through a close-up study of "The Mountain Kingdom." A developing nation surrounded by an industrialized power, Lesotho is both an anomaly among nations and, at the same time, a symbol of the geographical and cultural dynamics at work in almost every land. Study of Lesotho reveals with particular clarity the way physical geography has shaped, preserved, and transformed local human culture. The intent of this study guide is to direct student attention to that interplay. The topic units of this guide have been grouped by three academic levels: (1) grades 3-5; (2) grades 6-9; and (3) grades 10-12. The units within each level have been developed along the five fundamental themes of geography. The lesson material within each topic is arranged in five sub-sections. In each topic unit, the Focus section briefly summarizes the subject(s) of the lesson(s). The Resource section lists related worksheets, handouts, and maps. The Background section supplies additional information about the topic. The Activities section details a variety of Lesotho-related exercises for students. The final Extension section suggests ways to bring these topic activities home for students by linking the study of Lesotho to life in the United States. (Author/DK)

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WorldWise
SCHOOLS

Destination: Lesotho

Africa
Lesotho

Study Guide

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Destination: Lesotho

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WWS 20T-93

About this Guide

This study guide has been developed for teachers and students participating in the Peace Corps World Wise Schools program. The primary purpose of the study guide series is to enhance each class's correspondence with its Peace Corps Volunteer and to help students gain a greater understanding of regions and cultures different from their own.

The specific purpose of *Destination: Lesotho* is to support these aims through a close-up study of "The Mountain Kingdom." A developing nation surrounded by an industrialized power, Lesotho is both an anomaly among nations and, at the same time, a symbol of the geographical and cultural dynamics at work in almost every land. Here the contrast between tradition and modernity, between rural and urban ways of being is delineated as starkly as the rugged terrain. Study of Lesotho reveals with particular clarity the way physical geography has shaped, preserved, and transformed local human culture. The intent of this study guide is to direct student attention to that interplay.

For ease of selection, the topic units of *Destination: Lesotho* have been grouped by three academic levels: grades 3-5, grades 6-9, and grades 10-12. The units within each level have been developed along the five fundamental themes of geography (see p. 7), and are letter-coded accordingly. The lesson material within each topic is arranged in five sub-sections.

In each topic unit, the Focus section briefly summarizes the subject(s) of the lesson(s). The Resources section lists related worksheets, handouts, and maps. The Background section supplies additional information about the topic. The Activities section details a variety of Lesotho-related exercises for your students. The final Extension section suggests ways to bring these topic activities "back home." In addition to linking the study of Lesotho to life in the United States, this Extension section also details specific ways the study of Lesotho can enhance your class's correspondence with its own Peace Corps Volunteer--*no matter in which country he or she serves.*

You are encouraged to read through *all* the topic units and select those most appropriate for your students. Topic units designated for one grade level may be adapted to fit the others you teach. *Upper grade levels will particularly benefit from supplementary background material provided by the topic units of lower grades.* The table of contents provides a quick orientation to this guide and may be especially helpful for teachers interested in pursuing an area of interest in greater depth, *e.g.*, water issues in Lesotho.

As with all educational materials, evaluation and revision are an ongoing process. World Wise School welcomes comments on all of its materials, and encourages you to share with us the activities you and your colleagues develop and find effective.

Note: The pronounciation of key Sesotho terms in *Destination: Lesotho* has been approximated for English speakers. Apologies to Sesotho speakers for any unintentional misrepresentations.

Table of Contents

About this Guide 3

Part I: Information for Teachers 5

Peace Corps 6
Five Fundamental Themes of Geography 7
Lesotho: An Overview 8

Part II: Activities 12

Grades 3-5:

Nations Large and Small 13
What Sort of Lesotho? 13
School and Village Plan 15
Amazing Maize 16
Water and Rain 18
Touring Lesotho 21

Grades 6-9:

Lesotho and Africa 22
Looking at Lesotho 22
At Home in Lesotho 23
Cattle Culture 24
Environmental Crisis: Soil Erosion 26
Regional Differences: Schooling 27

Grades 10-12:

Winter in the Highlands 29
White Gold: The Lesotho Highlands Water Project 30
Lesotho's Migrant Workers 32
When Americans and Basotho Meet 33
Urban Ways vs. Rural Ways: The Impact of Modernity 34
Basotho Speak Out: Education 36

Part III: Resources 37

Activity Sheets 38
Bibliography 69
Acknowledgments 70
Maps 72

Part I: Information for Teachers

Peace Corps

Peace Corps was created when President John F. Kennedy issued an Executive Order on March 1, 1961. Since that time, Volunteers have helped people in other countries develop their skills to fight hunger, disease, poverty, and lack of opportunity. In return, Volunteers have seen themselves, their country, and the world from a new perspective.

Peace Corps, seeking to promote world peace and friendship, has three goals:

1. To help the people of interested countries meet their needs for trained men and women;
2. To help promote a better understanding of the people of the United States on the part of the people served; and,
3. To promote a better understanding of other people on the part of the people of the United States.

Since the first group of Volunteers arrived in Ghana, West Africa, in 1961, over 140,000 United States citizens have served as Peace Corps Volunteers in more than 100 countries. Although programs vary from country to country based on the nation's needs and requests, Volunteers traditionally offer skills in the areas of education, agriculture, business education, community development, natural resources, and health. Recent program additions have included environmental education, special education, and the development of programs aimed at improving the status of women and their families. Before placement at their sites, Volunteers receive training in the language and culture of their host countries, as well as in specific technical skills. Cross-cultural training, which includes the study of the history, customs, and values of the host country, prepares Volunteers to become part of a local community for the duration of their two-year service.

Today, over 6,000 Peace Corps Volunteers are working in over 90 countries around the globe. Although the average age of Volunteers in 1961 was 22, today it is approximately 31; in fact, one out of eight current Volunteers is over the age of 50. By living and working within their local communities, Peace Corps Volunteers not only learn about the people of their host country but also offer people around the world a chance to learn firsthand about the people of the United States.

Volunteers also care about carrying out the third goal of Peace Corps: teaching citizens of the United States about the people and cultures of their host countries. World Wise Schools promotes the third goal of Peace Corps by matching current Volunteers with third through twelfth grade classes throughout the United States in an information exchange. Begun in 1989, the program promotes geographic and cross-cultural awareness while developing the spirit of volunteerism. Today almost 3,000 classes from all 50 states are enrolled in the program.

When Peace Corps Volunteers return from overseas, they bring an intimate knowledge of other peoples and cultures. They understand that the ability of the United States to function in the world community depends on its understanding of other cultures. They know that global interdependence is a reality, not just a catchword. When Volunteers share their experiences with their World Wise classes, they help others to fashion a broader world view.

Fundamental Themes of Geography

Adapted from materials developed by social studies teachers of Baltimore County (Maryland) Public Schools and members of the Maryland Geographic Alliance. Used with permission.

Location: Position on the Earth's Surface

All locations can be defined as precise points on the earth's surface identified by a grid system of latitude and longitude (absolute location). Location can also be communicated by describing a place in relationship to other places (relative location). Students learn about location when asked to:

- use direction, distance, scale, and standard symbols on a map;
- use a number/letter system or latitude and longitude to locate places on maps; and
- suggest reasons for the location of a city, road factory, school, or store.

Place: Physical and Human Characteristics

All places on the earth have distinctive features that give them meaning and character and distinguish them from other places. Places may be characterized by their physical features (climate and landforms) and human characteristics (population, settlement, and economics). Students learn about place when asked to:

- describe different kinds of shelters based on environment and culture;
- use text references and maps to describe the climatic characteristics of a place; and
- analyze a place based on a song, picture, or story.

Relationships Within Places: Humans and their Environments

Understanding the impact of humans on the environment involves learning about the physical and social factors that produce environmental change. People modify or adapt to natural settings in ways that reveal their cultural values, economic and political circumstances, and technological abilities. Students learn about relationships within places when asked to:

- evaluate how people use the physical environment to meet their needs;
- analyze the relationship between the use of natural resources and the economy of a region; and
- describe environmental changes resulting from the use of tools/technology.

Movement: Humans Interacting on Earth

People interact with each other both locally and globally by travel, communication, and the exchange of goods and services. Visible evidence of global interdependence and the interaction of humans and places includes the movement of people, ideas, and materials. Students learn about movement when asked to:

- explain how the need for natural resources encouraged exploration and settlement;
- define examples of cultural borrowing and cultural diffusion; and
- predict the impact of migration on an area.

Regions: How They Form and Change

A region is an area that displays unity in terms of selected characteristics that distinguish it from other areas. Some regions are defined by one characteristic such as a government, language, or land; others, by the interplay of many criteria. Regions may be redefined as criteria change. Students learn about regions when asked to:

- use selected criteria to outline geographic regions on maps;
- compare political, economic, and social differences among regions; and
- evaluate how the boundaries of a region might change.

Lesotho: An Overview

The Land

Lesotho (lay-SOO-too) is a small mountain kingdom located in southern Africa. It is about the size of Maryland in total land area (11,718 square miles). Completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa, Lesotho is not a homeland, but rather an independent sovereign nation with historical ties to Great Britain. It is geographically distinguished not only by its insular location, but also by its high altitude terrain. Often called "The Roof of Africa," Lesotho has the highest low point of any nation on Earth; elevations within this rugged country range from 5,000 to over 11,000 feet above sea level.

Within these elevations, Lesotho's terrain can be divided into three distinct zones: *lowlands*, *foothills*, and *mountains*. Characterized by buttes and plateaus rising from wide plains between 5,000 and 6,000 feet above sea level, the *lowlands* resemble parts of the American Southwest. This thin crescent-like region on the western side of Lesotho is the site of most of the country's population. Lesotho's modern capital city, Maseru (mah-SAY-roo), is located here as well. The Lesotho *foothills*, with elevations between 6,000 and 7,000 feet, also support villages and agricultural life. Comprising approximately two-thirds of Lesotho's total land area, it is the high *mountains*, however, that dominate the physical and cultural landscape of "The Kingdom in the Sky."

Dating back to the time of the dinosaurs, the Maluti (mah-LOO-tee) Mountains form part of the larger Drakensberg Range of southern Africa. Volcanic in origin, their worn grassy slopes now provide grazing lands for livestock and, when not too steep, terraced fields for contour agriculture. Several large rivers find their source in these Lesotho highlands and course through the mountains in deep canyon-like valleys. Here, as in the lowlands and foothills, soil erosion is a significant problem. While breathtaking to behold, the escarpments and gorges which characterize the mountain region have been a formidable barrier to the development of Lesotho's interior infrastructure. Thus, isolated from the westernization that has increasingly transformed life in the more populated lowlands, highland villages retain more traditional ways of life.

Lesotho's high elevation, combined with its location in the southern hemisphere relative to the equator, accounts for a temperate climate. A country of four seasons, Lesotho's warmest month is January, with temperatures reaching a maximum of 95 degrees F. In winter (June to August) temperatures may be mild by day, but plunge at night. Frost is common throughout Lesotho at this time, while readings below zero have been recorded in the mountains. Snowfall is not unexpected, especially in the mountains where several feet may accumulate.

Generally, however, winter coincides with Lesotho's dry season. Precipitation, primarily from thunderstorms, is greatest from October to March. About 28 inches of rain fall in an average year, although the highlands receive somewhat more. A few scattered showers may appear at other times but usually the skies are clear and blue over 300 days a year. Recently, prolonged dry seasons combined with scanty rainfall throughout the southern Africa region created drought conditions some considered the worst in 100 years. Several years in duration, the drought threatened populations throughout the country, particularly in rural areas which depend on subsistence farming.

History and Government

Basutoland (now Lesotho) was sparsely populated by the nomadic Khoisan ("bushmen") until the end of the 16th century. Between the 16th and 19th centuries, refugees from surrounding areas gradually formed the Basotho (Bah-SOO-too) ethnic group.

In 1818, the legendary statesman Moshoeshoe I (moh-SHWAY-shway) consolidated these Basotho groupings and became their king. Basing his people on a high plateau, Moshoeshoe built a strong following while simultaneously defending his kingdom from a variety of invaders. Gradually, this nation of cattle herders spread outward to incorporate fertile plains that today form part of South Africa's Orange Free State. Clashes with white Boer settlers, emigrating from the Cape of South Africa, led to loss of these lands. Once again, the Basotho nation was relegated to the mountain regions. Against continued threats, Moshoeshoe I appealed to

Queen Victoria for assistance. In 1868, the country was placed under British protection. This arrangement set the Basotho nation on a political course separate from surrounding territories, which eventually united as the nation of South Africa in 1909.

Basutoland began to move toward independent sovereignty in the 1950s. In 1955, the Basutoland Council asked that it be empowered to legislate on internal affairs and in 1959, a new constitution gave Basutoland its first elected legislature. General elections with universal adult suffrage were held in April 1965, with several political parties represented. On October 4, 1966, the new Kingdom of Lesotho attained full independence as a constitutional monarchy with an elected bicameral parliament.

As with many new nations, Lesotho's first steps as an independent democracy were faltering ones. After national elections in 1970 indicated a loss to the ruling political party, the Lesotho parliament was dissolved and a new pro-government national assembly instituted. Opposition to the ruling regime led to internal disorder. A Lesotho military take-over occurred in 1986, prompted by these internal tensions as well as external pressure from the Republic of South Africa. (Across the border, Lesotho was perceived as a haven for members of the African National Congress (ANC), the anti-apartheid party of Nelson Mandela.) After the coup, activities of Lesotho's political parties were suspended. Executive and legislative powers were given to King Moshoeshoe II, who was to act on the advice of a self-appointed Military Council.

Continued differences led the military government to strip King Moshoeshoe II of his powers in 1990; he was exiled to Europe. The Military Council then established a National Constituent Assembly to formulate a new constitution. It also promised to return Lesotho to civilian rule. Later that same year, Moshoeshoe's son, Letsie III, was installed as king. Today Lesotho has a constitutional monarchy in conjunction with a democratically elected, civilian government.

People

According to 1988 statistics, Lesotho's current population totals over one and a half million persons (1,660,000), with an annual growth rate of 2.7 percent, one of the lowest in Africa. Unlike the United States, the population is primarily rural, with only about 15 percent of people living in towns and cities. Most Basotho live in small, well-defined villages which are surrounded by crop and grazing lands. Nevertheless, recent migration patterns within the country suggest that over a third of Lesotho's citizens will be urban dwellers by the year 2000. (By far the largest city in Lesotho, Maseru presently has a population of over 109,000 persons.)

Lesotho is a patriarchal society. According to 1991 statistics from *The Europa World Year Book*, however, more than a third (38%) of the entire male labor force lives and works outside Lesotho as migrant labor in the Republic of South Africa. For this reason, women play a strong and vital role in community life. They make many day-to-day decisions and take the lead in both farming and domestic duties. Families in Lesotho tend to be larger than those in United States with children considered a great blessing and ties with relatives of utmost importance. Those who have come before--the elderly, ancestors, and parents--are accorded considerable respect. In Lesotho, all men are addressed as *Ntate* (n-DAH-day), which means father; all women are addressed as *'M'e* (m-MAY), which means mother. Similarly, unmarried young adults and children often address one another as *Abuti* (ah-BOO-tee), brother, or *Ausi* (ah-OO-see), sister, regardless of family connections.

Bound together as a people after a series of tribal wars in the early 19th century, the Basotho now represent a distinct ethnic group. Over three million Basotho permanently reside in South Africa; the rest are citizens of Lesotho. This settlement pattern makes Lesotho one of the most culturally homogenous countries in Africa: more than 99 percent of its people are Basotho. The other one percent represent Europeans and Asians, primarily those working in business and trade. Despite the tensions across the border in South Africa, racial relations in apartheid-free Lesotho are very good. Like their nation's founder, Moshoeshoe I, the Basotho are known as a remarkably conciliatory and hospitable people.

Nearly all who reside in Lesotho speak the official language, Sesotho (say-SOO-too), which shares many grammatical features with other African Bantu languages. Among other attributes, Sesotho is organized around six classes of nouns, each with its own singular and plural prefixes. (For example, in one class of nouns referring to things, *sefofane* (airplane) and *sefate* (tree) become *lifofane* and *lifate* in the plural. In the class of nouns referring to human beings, the singular words *mosali* (wife), *monna* (husband) become, in the plural, *basali* and *banna*. Thus, while one person from Lesotho, is called a Mosotho (moh-SOO-too), two persons are referred to as Basotho.) Many also consider the Sesotho language to be particularly well-suited to poetry and indeed the nation has a rich heritage of ballads and songs.

Reflecting Lesotho's colonial legacy, English is also an official language, most commonly used in urban and government circles. All schoolchildren learn English as well as Sesotho. English is the medium of instruction in all high schools.

Most Basotho today are Roman Catholics; Christianity was introduced to the nation more than 150 years ago with the advent of French missionaries. Today there are Protestant denominations as well, which, like the Roman Catholic dioceses, are now under Basotho leadership. Alongside these religions, traditional beliefs and customs continue to play an important role in the conduct of Basotho life, particularly in rural areas.

Economy

Lesotho is primarily a country of subsistence farmers. Most Basotho grow food for their own consumption. Maize, wheat, and sorghum are commonly harvested as are peas, beans, and potatoes. Cattle are abundant, but infrequently slaughtered. Traditionally, cattle are prized as a sign of family wealth; they are also used in agricultural work such as plowing. Sheep and goats provide a significant export of wool and mohair respectively, and are an occasional source of meat as well.

By tradition, land in Lesotho is held in trust by the king on behalf of the people; it cannot be bought or sold. Villagers have communal rights to grazing lands while arable land is allocated to families by local chiefs. Because of the country's rugged terrain, only 13 percent of Lesotho's total land is, in fact, arable. Much of it is also threatened by soil erosion. As Lesotho's population continues to increase, the pressure on the land increases as well; land shortages have begun to develop. Once a food exporter, Lesotho has now become a food importer; South Africa is its major supplier.

While there is some light industry in the country, Lesotho's GNP depends heavily on the income earned by the nation's 200,000 migrant laborers who work in South Africa, primarily in the gold mines. Even though such work requires months of separation from home under harsh conditions, mine contracts are competitively sought; wages sent home often support extensive family networks.

Other than a few diamond deposits, Lesotho lacks the mineral wealth of neighboring South Africa. In this relatively arid region of the world, water is Lesotho's greatest natural resource. Currently, an ambitious multi-billion dollar project is underway to dam several rivers in the Maluti watershed. By an inter-governmental agreement signed in 1986, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project is intended to generate both income and electricity for Lesotho while at the same time supplying water for industrial South Africa.

Although the government of Lesotho has been highly critical of racial segregation policies in South Africa, this landlocked nation cannot escape its geography. Its size and location make it heavily economically dependent on its giant industrial neighbor. For example, statistics from 1988 show Lesotho exported $60 million worth of goods in a single year, while it imported goods valued at $500 million, 95 percent of which came from South Africa. Lesotho also receives more than 90 percent of its electrical power from across the border. The interchangeability of currency testifies as well to the close ties between these two nations. In Lesotho, the South African *rand* circulates as freely as the Basotho *loti*. (Backed by the *rand*, approximately 2.7 *maloti* -- named for Lesotho's Maluti Mountains--equal one U.S. dollar.) Therefore, while not a homeland, Lesotho is nevertheless quite sensitive to economic and political developments in South Africa, both positive and negative. Today, its future is in many ways as open and uncharted as that of the emerging post-apartheid state which surrounds it.

Education

Education has long been an important aspect of Basotho culture. Before European influence, it was customary for adolescent boys and girls to undergo separate "initiation schools." Sequestered in a remote location for several months, groups of youths received instruction in mysteries of the Basotho tradition by special adult leaders. After ritual circumcision (for females as well as males), the initiates rejoined their communities as men and women, bringing their closely guarded secrets with them. Although no longer widespread, the practices related to traditional education continue in some outlying areas, particularly for boys.

European missionaries introduced western-style education to the Basotho over 150 years ago. Basotho now administer the educational program, although the majority of schools remain church-affiliated. The educational system still reflects the influence of British colonialism in structure and curricula. Primary education is comprised of seven grades, or standards, and is conducted mostly in Sesotho. Class sizes are larger than in the United States (fifty in a class is not uncommon), but discipline problems are rare. There can be quite a range of ages in each standard as pupils with family responsibilities, particularly herdboys, begin their schooling late. After standard seven, students take a national test and, if successful, may begin secondary education.

Because of the distances many students must travel to reach their schools, most high schools outside the urban areas are boarding schools. The fees for tuition plus room and board are often a great hardship to many families. As a consequence, many students are unable to continue their studies. Those who do face a curriculum as exacting a any in the United States. There are five grades (called "forms") and English is the medium of instruction. In addition to courses in English, math, vocational arts, and the physical and social sciences, most students also study Sesotho literature, agriculture, and the Bible. Pupils take a national exam after Form C (grade 10). Most leave school after this time. Those who remain proceed to two more years of high school. These final years represent intensive study for a rigorous international exam for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate. The handful of students who pass this British exam with high marks may enroll at the four-year National University of Lesotho, at Roma, with tuition paid by the Lesotho government.

Despite the extensiveness of the educational system in Lesotho, it must be noted that the great majority of children are unable to complete their studies. Learning is often handicapped by lack of financial and material resources both at home and at school. Nevertheless, Lesotho does boast one of the highest literacy rates in Africa (estimates range from 59% to 79% of all adults). This success can be attributed in part to the strong tradition of schooling within the culture, the tuition-free primary schools, and the value Basotho place on educating girls as well as boys.

Material for this Lesotho overview section was adapted from notes drawn from the following sources: The Africa Review, 1991/92. 15th Edition. Edison, New Jersey: Hunter Publishing Company, 1991. Culturgram Communication Aid: Kingdom of Lesotho. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Center for International and Area Studies Publication Services, 1983. Encyclopaedia Britannica. 15th Edition. S.v. "Lesotho," 1991. The Europa World Year Book 1992, Volume II. "Lesotho," London, G.B.: Europa Publications Limited, 1992. Glaser, Tom. "Lesotho--Kingdom in the Sky," Journal of World Food Programme. No. 5 (January-March 1988). Schwager, Dirk and Colleen. Lesotho. Maseru: Schwager Publications, 1986. Trends in Developing Economies 1991. "Lesotho," Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1991. Portions of the History and Government section were reprinted from the Country Information Packet. Maseru, Lesotho: Peace Corps Lesotho, 1992.

Part II: Activities

The major topics of *Destination: Lesotho* have been developed in accordance with the five fundamental themes of geography, as described on page 7. The title of each topic is followed by a series of codes which specifies the themes addressed:

L = Location
P = Place
Rel = Relationships within Places
M = Movement
Reg = Regions

Within each topic, activities have been arranged in the suggested order of presentation. Many of the activities in this study guide highlight differences between Lesotho's rural highlands and more urban lowlands. Schooling in Lesotho is also a salient theme. Issues related to water use receive special attention as well.

Lastly, this section suggests many ways the study of Lesotho can enhance your class's correspondence with its Peace Corps Volunteer, *no matter in which country he or she serves.*

Note: the symbol * beside an activity indicates that particular exercise is best done *before* your students have viewed the video.

Activities Guide
Grades 3-5

Nations Large and Small [L, Reg]

Focus: physical size of Lesotho relative to Africa and the United States
Resources: map of Africa, p. 72; map of the United States, p. 73

Background:

This activity introduces students to the size and shape of Lesotho by comparing it to larger regions. At 11,718 square miles, Lesotho is just a little bigger than the size of Maryland.

Activities:

1. Ask students to describe Lesotho's location and size as related to Africa as a whole. Which countries appear to be about the same size as Lesotho? Are any countries smaller?

2. Ask students to describe Lesotho's size as related to the continental United States. Challenge your students to estimate how many times Lesotho could fit inside this U.S. map. You may want to discuss strategies for making an accurate estimate (*e.g.*, counting how many times it fits within one quadrant of the U.S. map, then extrapolating).

   Once your class has reached an estimate, divide your students into groups of four. Charge each group to work together to check the accuracy of the estimate. (Suggested approach: cut out the outline of Lesotho located in the corner of the U.S. map. Trace this shape over the U.S. map until the entire region is covered, then count.) Discuss the results:

   - Which states of the lower 48 appear to be about the size of Lesotho? Are any states smaller?
   - What advantages and disadvantages might there be to being such a small country?
   - What might be the impact of a country's size on the following: cultural homogeneity/diversity, availability of natural resources, political and economic relationships with other nations, in-country movement?

Extension:

1. Refer to the Peace Corps World Map on p. 76. Ask your students to estimate: (a) the number of times Lesotho could fit in your Volunteer's country (or vice versa), and (b) the number of times your Volunteer's country could fit in the continental United States (or vice versa).

What Sort of Lesotho? [Reg, P, Rel, M]

Focus: comparisons among various regions: urban-rural, lowlands-highlands, Lesotho-United States
Resource: worksheet, "What Sort of Lesotho?," p. 38

Background:

The first activity is intended to be an *introductory exercise* since it assesses students' initial perceptions about Lesotho. The second activity has been designed as a *concluding exercise* for the study of Lesotho since it asks students to synthesize what they have learned.

Activities:

* 1. As an introduction to Lesotho, ask students to identify which items on the worksheet they believe are found in this African country. Do this *before* they have learned anything about Lesotho. Ask your students to underline the items on the worksheet (p. 38) they think they might find in Lesotho. Your students may wish to compare answers, and discuss reasons for including some items while excluding others. Please do not judge the responses as correct or incorrect at this time. Simply collect the sheets to hand back at the end of your unit on Lesotho. As Lesotho is a country of paradoxes, many students will be surprised to discover, later, that *all* of these items are part of its contemporary culture.

2. As a conclusion to your studies, have students demonstrate knowledge of Lesotho by sorting these same items according to regional criteria. First, hand out the worksheet. Tell your students all the items on the list can be found in Lesotho. (If you have also used the worksheet as an introductory activity, you may want your students to first revise their assessments on their own.)

   At this point, introduce the concept of "region." Remind your class that even one country, such as Lesotho, can be divided into several kinds of regions depending on the criteria one selects. Inform your class that even the items on this list can be sorted in several different ways according to where they might be found in Lesotho.

   Tell your students you will ask them to do several sorting activities. Depending on the abilities of your class, you may want to make this a class activity (with a chalkboard sort), a pair or group activity, or an individual activity. In the latter two cases, have students use scissors to cut each word from the list, as they will be making the sorts on their desktops.

   Proceed with the sorting exercises in the following order and manner:

   (a) **Urban vs. Rural:** Have students sort items according to whether they are found *predominantly* in the urban capital or in the rural countryside. Your students should actually arrange their items under *three* categories: Urban, Rural, and Both. When the class has completed the sort, share solutions.

   - Discuss: what knowledge about Lesotho's culture and/or terrain helped you make these choices? For future use in sort (c), ask students to label predominantly **Rural** items with an "**R**," **Urban** items with a "**U**," and "**Both**" items with a "**B**."

   (b) **Highlands vs. Lowlands:** Have your students temporarily set aside the Urban items. Ask them to re-sort the Rural items into the sub-categories of Rural Highlands (mountains) vs. Rural Lowlands. Again, there will also be a "Both" category. Share solutions.

   - Discuss: what knowledge about Lesotho's climate and/or terrain helped you make these choices?

   (c) **Modern (Westernized) Lesotho vs. Traditional Lesotho:** Using all the items again, have your students sort according to the presence of 20th century technology. What items are the result of Lesotho's contact with the modernized West? What items reflect its continuity with tradition? Share solutions.

   - Discuss: what knowledge about the modern world led you to sort these items this way? Has the impact of the modern world been greater in the urban lowland areas or the rural mountain areas? Why?

   (d) **Lesotho vs. the United States:** Using all the word cards, have students sort according to items exclusive to Lesotho and those shared in common with the United States. Share solutions.

   - Discuss: most of what Lesotho shares in common with the United States is also part of 20th century global culture; what might be some items of our American culture (not included here) that are as particular to us as Basotho blankets to Lesotho?

3. Assign groups of students to make permanent records of the various sorts by pasting down the word cards in categories on a piece of paper and/or by creating Venn diagrams. Title each sort and post them in the classroom.

4. Challenge your students to think of other ways to sort these items (*e.g.*, types of foods, people, entertainment). Pairs might enjoy making a variety of categories then asking another pair to guess what the grouped items have in common.

Extension:

1. Send a copy of your **Lesotho vs. the United States** sort to your Volunteer. Ask him or her to indicate which items shared between Lesotho and the United States are also part of his or her host culture. Perhaps your Volunteer can also send your class a similar type of Venn diagram comparing his or her host country with the United States.

   - Does the Volunteer's host culture share any items in common with Lesotho that it does *not* share with the United States? What are they?
   - What are some items found in your Volunteer's host culture that are *neither* part of Lesotho nor the United States?

School and Village Plan [L, P]

Focus: map reading/cardinal directions

Resources: map and accompanying worksheet, "Sefako's School and Village Plan," pp. 39-40

Background:

This plan is reprinted from a fourth grade social studies text used in Lesotho. The plan depicts a typical rural community in Lesotho. While approximately 15% of Basotho do live in the urban area around Maseru, a modern city, most of the population is located in small settlements such as this one. As in many rural areas of the United States, the school, church, and post office form the center of the community. This worksheet asks students to describe the relative location of such buildings using the cardinal directions.

Activities:

1. Have students practice using their knowledge of cardinal directions by completing the map and worksheet (pp. 39-40) in pairs or individually. You may need to review the directions beforehand. Discuss answers.

   Answers to worksheet:

   1. *false: west*
   2. *true*
   3. *true*
   4. *true*
   5. *false*
   6. *house*
   7. *post office*
   8. *church*
   9. *morning: shadows to the west side of buildings*
   10. *yes: the doors face west where the sun sets*
   11. *spring or summer: plants growing in gardens*

2. Have students describe the locations of various Lesotho towns in relation to one another using the cardinal directions (*e.g.*, Maseru is *west* of Thaba-Tseka). You will need to distribute the map of Lesotho on p. 74. (Save these maps for the "Touring Lesotho" activity on p. 21.) Pairs of students might also want to make up and exchange location riddles similar to those on the worksheet.

3. Alternatively, have students describe the location of various African countries in relation to one another, in an activity similar to the one above. Use the map of Africa on p. 72.

Extension:

1. Have pairs of students draw a plan of their own school (or their classroom) and its immediate surroundings, in accordance with the cardinal directions.

2. Send one of your school plans to your Volunteer. Ask him or her to send your class a similar kind of plan that maps his or her workplace or living area.

Amazing Maize [Rel, P, M]

Focus: growing cycle and uses of a staple food; diet in Lesotho
Resource: worksheet, "Amazing Maize," p. 41

Background:

Originally from the New World, maize (corn) was introduced to southern Africa by Europeans several centuries ago. It is now the principal food crop of Lesotho. Because it grows well in this temperate climate, maize is, in fact, the staple food for rural Basotho. The excerpt for activities #1 and #2 (printed on the next page) describes some ways Basotho cultivate and use maize. Relatively inexpensive, locally grown, easily stored and versatile in preparation, maize is a food well-suited for the dietary constraints many Basotho experience because of economic and geographic circumstances. Activity #3 examines the role maize also plays in Lesotho school menus.

Despite the predominance of maize in the diet of many Basotho, students should be aware that a wide variety of foods *can* be purchased in Lesotho. Well-supplied by South Africa, supermarkets in Maseru are virtually indistinguishable from those in the United States--one can buy everything from frosted flakes cereal to pizza mixes. Nevertheless, such variety is generally inaccessible to most Basotho because family incomes are too low to purchase expensive, imported food.

Lesotho's geography compounds the problem by affecting distribution of those goods. The country's rugged terrain makes the development of infrastructure physically and financially difficult. Thus, the more limited a community in its access to roads, the more constraints it experiences in diet. In isolated regions of the mountains, for example, one eats what is seasonally and locally grown (maize, potatoes, beans, and peas--fresh fruit is almost never available because of the elevation). In addition, many schools in both the lowlands and highlands lack access to electricity and running water. Without refrigerators, mixers, and dishwashers, food storage, preparation, and clean-up must remain quite simple. For these reasons, locally grown, dry storage foods like maize and beans/peas are common menu items in rural schools.

Introduce this topic unit to your students by first relating maize to their own lives. Bring in some maize for them to examine and identify the parts. Discuss: where and how does maize grow? Who likes maize in this class? How do you you like to eat it? What other ways do people eat maize?

Activities:

1. Engage your students in a listening exercise about maize, in preparation for the worksheet, "Amazing Maize." Before reading aloud the passage below, devise a few comprehension questions appropriate to the level of your students. For example,

    - What animal plows the maize fields?
    - What do the girls help their mothers do?
    - What animals graze in the maize fields after harvest?

    Present these questions to the class before you read to focus their listening. You may also want to write the passage's underlined words on the chalkboard, and discuss their meanings before or after the listening exercise. When students have completed this exercise and shared their answers, have them turn their attention to the "Amazing Maize" worksheet.

    Special thanks to Volunteer Christina Carlson for the following information about maize:

    > In Lesotho, only 13% of the land is [suitable for plowing], and most farming is subsistence level. Maize or mealie meal is the staple food and crop in Lesotho. In the mountains the fields are worked by the whole family. The young boys learn how to train the oxen to plow the fields, the men and women sow the seeds, and girls help their mothers weed the fields through the summer. During harvest every bit of crop is used, the ears of maize are eaten fresh (the stalks chewed on by the children, quite sweet!); [kernels from the maize ears] are also allowed to dry and [are] ground by stone or machine into the [maize] meal used daily for cooking *papa*, the

staple food. Husks and stalks are used as fodder for the animals during the winter months and are also used as temporary roofs on the stone *kraals*, lashed down with woven vines or braids made from [locally grown] grasses. The sheep and goats are allowed to graze only after most of the crop has been removed.

papa (PAH-pah): a thick grits-like porridge made from maize
kraals (crawls): cattle corrals built near homes in rural villages

2. After discussing answers to the worksheet, have students work in small groups to brainstorm responses to three worksheet-related "brain-busters." Divide your class into groups of three. Give each group about ten minutes to come up with as many sound ideas as they can about these questions. Instruct groups to write down their ideas. Then call the class together and have each group share its ideas. Answers will vary, so have students explain the logic behind their reasoning. The questions are as follows:

   - Mountain farmers in Lesotho use oxen instead of tractors to plow their family fields. Why?
   - Mountain farmers in Lesotho plow their fields along the contours of the slopes rather than up and down. Why?
   - Why is it useful to have sheep and goats graze in the maize fields after harvest?

   Answers to worksheet and brain-busters questions:
   I. (b)   II. 1. (b) 2. (a, e) 3. (c, d) 4. (f)   III. 2, 1, 5, 4, 3

   1. *common responses: lack of roads in mountainous terrain limits access to tractors, gasoline, parts; tractors are very expensive; fields are often too steep for tractors; tractors are not efficient to use when plowing small family plots; oxen are readily available and strong; oxen are more gentle with the fragile soil, also fertilize it while plowing.*

   2. *common responses: it is difficult to control oxen when plowing down a slope, hard work when plowing up; contour plowing prevents soil erosion and the washing away of seeds. It keeps rainfall longer where it is needed.*

   3. *common responses: sheep and goats clear the field for the next year's plowing; they get fed and fertilize the soil at the same time.*

3. Have your students consider the relationship between geography and diet by comparing the Lesotho school lunch menu on the worksheet with their own school menu. Once students have completed the "Amazing Maize" worksheet, pass out copies of a week's menu from your own school. Ask students to identify the staple (wheat) and circle the number of times it appears in some form on the menu. Now compare your menu with the Lesotho school menu. Solicit reactions from your students: how are the two menus alike/different? Encourage students to brainstorm ideas related to the following questions.

   - In which menu does the staple play a bigger role? Why might this be?
   - What might be some of the connections between Lesotho's mountainous geography and its school lunch menu?
   - What might your school menu look like if you based your diet on foods locally and seasonally available? If your school also lacked electrical power?

Extension:

1. Make a class graph which records: (a) the many ways people in the United States eat maize, and (b) the particular maize preferences of each student.

2. Have your class research other regions of the word whose staple is maize. What foods do people of these regions make from maize that are different from those in Lesotho? What might account for the differences?

3. Find out the staple food of your Volunteer's host country. Ask him or her to describe the ways this food is grown and prepared. Does it have other uses as well?

Water and Rain [Rel, P, Reg]

Focus: uses of water in Lesotho; rainfall patterns
Resources: story, "Using Water Everyday," p. 42; worksheet, "*Pula!*," p. 43

Background:

Everybody uses water, but some regions of the world use more than others. According to 1987 statistics provided by The World Resources Institute, Lesotho appears to have one of the lowest water use rates, per capita, in the world. Calculating annual rates of freshwater resources and withdrawals, the report indicates people in Lesotho use an average of 2.5 gallons of water each day. Contrast this figure with the corresponding ones for the whole of Africa (176.6 gallons per person per day) and for the United States (a whopping 1,565 gallons per person per day). Some might argue these statistics are misleading, as they measure a nation's *total* water use, figuring in that used by industry and agriculture. In that sense, the Lesotho figure reveals as much about its economy as its climate. With little industry or irrigation-based agriculture, Lesotho has a national water consumption rate that is most likely quite similar to its domestic rate.

Even Lesotho's domestic consumption (*i.e.*, water which supports the basic needs of people and their animals) is far less than the U.S. consumption rate of approximately 150 gallons per person per day. (Citing statistics by The World Resource Institute, *The Water Encyclopedia* (Second Edition) lists the breakdown of total U.S. water use as follows: public: 10%, industry: 11%, electric cooling: 38%, agriculture and irrigation: 41%.)

Among other factors, the disparity in consumption between Lesotho and the United States reflects a difference in national infrastructure. Most Basotho in rural areas lack access to electricity or running water. Thus, many live without dependence on the many water-using household appliances people in the United States often consider essential, such as washing machines, dishwashers, showers, and indoor toilet facilities. With a technologically simple lifestyle, many Basotho use the minimum amount of water necessary to meet their basic daily needs. The story, "Using Water Everyday," asks students to identify what those needs are, and to differentiate which are cultural (*i.e.*, particular to Lesotho) and which are more universal.

As this story (p. 42) implies, women are the primary water gatherers in Lesotho, as well as throughout rural Africa. Like their mothers, almost all Basotho girls learn to carry water on their heads by the age of five or six. This skill is a necessity. Even in urban areas, families of modest means still must fetch water from a community pump. Meeting the water needs of one family requires several trips to a water source each day. Travel time may be more than thirty minutes, depending on the source and the time of year. It may also require the water bearer to climb hills and navigate other challenges of Lesotho's rugged terrain. Girls begin practicing the art of water carrying when they are very young. First, they walk with water-filled tin cans on their heads, without using hands to steady the can. Soon they run relay races in recess competitions. By the time they are teenagers, these girls will balance heavy water buckets on their heads with seeming ease and grace.

Like the entire region of southern Africa, Lesotho is a relatively arid land. Rural Basotho who depend on farming especially do not take the gifts of rain for granted. Indeed, *pula* (rain) is so central to the life of the Basotho nation that it is part of the national mottto, *"Khotso, Pula, Nala,"* (Peace, Rain, Prosperity). The nearby country of Botswana even names its national currency after *pula*. The precipitation chart appearing on the worksheet, "*Pula!*" represents a typical year's precipitation pattern in Lesotho. These figures, reprinted with permission from the Lesotho fourth grade social studies textbook, record rainfall in Mohale's Hoek, a regional capital town located in the lowlands south of Maseru. (You may wish to have your students locate it on the map on p. 74). The pattern of precipitation here is fairly representative of the country, although the mountains are somewhat wetter.

As you will note, Lesotho experiences a distinct dry season annually. Indeed, Basotho are accustomed to several months of cloudless blue sky each year. Coinciding with winter, the dry season usually does not significantly interfere with the agricultural seasons. The hard earth cannot be plowed or seeded, however, until the rains return. Neither can the crops grow well unless the rains continue, usually in the form of summer thunderstorms. Occasionally, the usual weather patterns become disrupted, and longer dry periods combined with scant rainfall during the "wet" season play havoc with the country's agriculture.

Along with the rest of the southern African region, Lesotho has recently endured such a drought. In addition to undermining farming efforts in the country, the drought years signficantly affected many people's access to clean water, particularly in rural areas. While drought alters the living patterns and health of an entire village, it has a particularly strong effect on women and girls. Not only must they travel ever-increasing distances to reach water in times of drought, they also spend more time waiting to collect the water they need. Especially attuned to the role of water in all of life, Basotho women and girls know well the value of rain's gift to this dry and thirsty land.

Activities:

1. Have your students illustrate the difference in water consumption between the United States and Lesotho by filling in the buckets of water bordering "Using Water Everyday," p. 42. Introduce this activity by bringing in a plastic gallon jug filled with water. If necessary, discuss the gallon as a measure of volume, then ask students to predict how many gallons of water per day each person in the United States uses on average. After they make their estimates, share the statistics below and have your students complete the accompanying border exercise.

   There are 300 buckets bordering p. 42. Each bucket represents five gallons of water. (Coincidentally, this is about the amount a Mosotho women carries on her head per trip from the local water source. How heavy would that be?) Have your students mark the number of buckets equalling the daily U.S. per capita consumption, either gross (approximately 1,500 gallons--300 buckets) or domestic (roughly 150 gallons--30 buckets). Then have them color the fraction of a bucket equalling Lesotho's gross per capita daily consumption (about 2.5 gallons–one half of a bucket). Were your students surprised by the figure(s)? Why? What are some of the reasons people in the United States use so much water? As the students read the story on p. 42, also ask them to think about reasons for the great discrepancy *between* water use in the United States and in Lesotho, *i.e.*, why do Basotho use so much less?

2. Have your students compare rural and urban water uses. Ask them to identify all the ways Palesa and her family used water in the worksheet's story. Write these uses on the chalkboard. *(For more information about why Mapalesa's name is similar to Palesa's, see p. 23 for background on Basotho name-giving traditions. For more information about traditional rondavels, including the method of mixing dung with soil for special mud plaster, see p. 47.)* After you discuss this story, read the following passage to your class: it tells about Palesa's urban cousin:

   > Palesa has a cousin named Mosa (MOH-sah), whose name means kindness. Mosa lives in the capital city of Maseru, where her father is a doctor. Mosa's family lives in a brick house with electricity and indoor running water. Like Palesa, Mosa uses water everyday but not always in the same ways.

   Now ask your class the following questions:

   - For what activities does Mosa *need* water just like Palesa?
   - How might Mosa *use* water differently because of having running water and electricity?
   - Would Palesa's water use be the same as Mosa's if she had running water and electricity in her house too? Why or why not?
   - In what specific ways would your daily use of water be different if your home did not have running water or electricity?

   After your students have discussed these questions, turn their attention to the challenge question you gave them in the first activity: what *are* some of the specific reasons our U.S. water consumption is so much higher than that of Lesotho? You may want students to brainstorm in groups before sharing their ideas with the class. If necessary, remind students to think about differences in climate, agriculture, economy, and lifestyle.

3. Have students interpret precipitation data by completing the "*Pula!*" worksheet, p. 43. Point out the metric measurements on the chart; have advanced students convert data to inches. (1 mm. = .04 in.)

Answers to worksheet:

1. *May - less muddy*
2. *August - a windy, dry month*
3. *September - as the rains have just begun*
4. *June, July, August - about 55 mm.*
5. *December, January, February - about 320 mm.*

4. Ask students to graph the following rainfall information from Maseru and compare it with Mohale's Hoek. The similarity of the results, presumably from different years, suggests the dry season is a country-wide annual pattern, rather than a quirk of nature. You may also want to have your students graph the temperature data. What connection between rainfall and temperature do they observe? What might account for this correlation? Analyzing the temperature data can also lead to a discussion about seasonal reversals between the northern and southern hemispheres.

Average Monthly Temperatures and Rainfall for Maseru, Lesotho

Month	Avg Max (F)	Avg Min (F)	Prep (inches)	Days w/Rain
January	86	59	3.94	10
February	83	58	3.74	10
March	78	54	3.70	10
April	72	46	2.17	7
May	65	38	1.02	5
June	61	32	.47	2
July	60	30	.51	2
August	66	38	.59	2
September	69	40	.79	3
October	78	48	2.24	7
November	80	53	3.11	8
December	84	58	3.15	9

Data provided by the National Climatic Data Center (NOAA),
U.S. Department of Commerce.

5. Discuss the difference between a dry season and a drought with your class. Share information about Lesotho's recent drought (see background information) with your students. Ask students how a rainfall chart of a drought year might look different from the Mohale's Hoek chart. If your students have read the story about Palesa, (p.42), ask them to predict how her daily life would be affected by a water shortage. Would drought have more of an impact on rural or urban familes? Why?

Extension:

1. Have students identify the source(s) of water in their communities.

2. Ask students to keep a record, write a story, or make a drawing illustrating the ways they use water in their daily lives.

3. Have your students graph precipitation data from their region in a way similar to the worksheet chart. Compare and contrast the two charts.

4. Have your class research rainfall patterns in your Volunteer's country. Is there more than one regional pattern? Why? Graph the patterns and compare with those of your own region and of Lesotho.

5. Ask your Volunteer about water-gathering practices in his or her country.
   - If indoor running water is uncommon, who fetches water? From what sources?
   - How is that water transported to the home?
   - How has your Volunteer's daily routine changed if he or she does not have running water ?

6. Ask your Volunteer about adverse climatic conditions in his or her country that occur on a regular basis. How have people in that country learned to cope with this phenomenon?

Touring Lesotho [M, L, P, Reg]

Focus: geographically appropriate modes of transport/map reading
Resources: map, "Kingdom of Lesotho," p. 74 and accompanying worksheet, "Touring Lesotho," p. 44

Background:

The physical geography of Lesotho, and the varied climates associated with it, have a profound influence on the mode and rate at which people move through this rugged country. This worksheet asks students to consider geography when deciding what mode of transport might be best suited for a particular trip. Written as a mini-adventure, the worksheet's story line introduces students to points of interest within Lesotho. It also provides practice reading a map.

A note regarding forms of transport in Lesotho: bus transportation is heavily used throughout the Lesotho lowlands and foothills. Unlike the United States, almost every community with access to an all-weather road is linked to public transportation. Cars and buses are very uncommon in most of the highlands because of the daunting terrain. Traveling from the lowlands to the highlands often involves a short plane ride. In addition to operating an international air service, the Lesotho government operates a fleet of small planes for transporting people and goods within the country. The skilled Basotho pilots are accustomed to flying "by sight" and landing on dirt airstrips nestled within the mountain ranges. Inclement weather can suspend air service for weeks at a time.

Once within the highlands, most people travel from place to place by horseback. The "Basotho pony" is famous for its agility. Basotho take pride in these large ponies and their saddlery. Most families own a pony as well as a donkey, for carrying loads. Of course, the most common means of transport throughout Lesotho is hiking on foot. In the rural areas of Lesotho, it is common for people to walk all day to reach a destination. It is easy to hike in Lesotho since the land is all open terrain.

Activities:

1. Have pairs of students demonstrate geographic problem-solving by completing the "Touring Lesotho" worksheet, p. 44. They will need to refer to the road map on p. 74. Pairs may want to compare their answers in small groups before discussing their answers as a class. Since this worksheet calls for creative thinking, solutions may vary. Ask your students to explain the geographical factors they considered in arriving at the answers they did.

2. Encourage students to record their travel paths on the Lesotho map, p. 74. Have them devise a key by which the different modes of transportation are indicated. Students may also want to cut out and affix the worksheet graphics to the appropriate sites on the map.

Extension:

1. Have your students consider how their daily life would be affected, if at all, if no roads were paved in their area. How would differences in seasons or climate affect local travel and the daily routine?

2. Ask your Volunteer about modes of transport in his or her country. How do people get around? Do they employ different modes depending on the region of travel, and/or the time of year?

3. Ask your Volunteer to tell about a memorable travel adventure. Because Volunteers live and travel like people in their host country, many have had interesting experiences related to public transportation.

Activities
Grades 6-9

Lesotho and Africa [L, Reg]

Focus: comparing Lesotho with other African countries
Resource: map of Africa, p. 72

Activity:

1. Have pairs of students work together to locate other countries in Africa that share given criteria with Lesotho. Your students may enjoy a timed challenge, the winning pair having submitted the most extensive written list. Suggested criteria:

   African countries, other than Lesotho, which...
   - begin with "L"
   - end with "O"
   - have capitals which begin with "M"
   - are of similar, or smaller, size as Lesotho
   - are within 1,000 miles of Lesotho
   - are completely south of the equator
   - are completely south of the Tropic of Capricorn
   - share the same latitude as Lesotho
   - are completely situated between 20 and 40 degrees eastern longitude

2. Challenge your students to come up with additional criteria based on data from atlases of the African continent. For example, which countries share similar patterns of elevation, vegetation, and rainfall with Lesotho?

3. Have students create a crossword puzzle using criteria from activities #1 and #2. Challenge them to write clues in relation to Lesotho, *e.g.*, "This country is smaller than Lesotho." Pairs may wish to swap puzzles.

Extension:

1. Engage your class in a similar type of map activity which relates your Volunteer's country to others in its region.

Looking at Lesotho [L, Reg]

Focus: the topography of Lesotho and its relationship to settlement patterns.
Resources: topographical map of Lesotho, p. 75, and accompanying worksheet, "Looking at Lesotho," p. 45

Background:

As the cultural geography of Lesotho is so interwined with its physical geography, an appreciation of the country's terrain will be important preparation for the topic units which follow. This *introductory activity* is best done at the outset of your study of Lesotho.

Activity:

* 1. Have your students interpret the topographical map of Lesotho by answering the questions on the worksheet, "Looking at Lesotho," p. 45. Discuss answers.

Extension:

1. Have students compare Lesotho's elevations with that of their own state and with other mountainous countries. How well does Lesotho deserve the nickname, "Kingdom in the Sky?"

2. Ask your Volunteer about the terrain of his or her host country.

   - Does the country have high elevations? If so, is the population less or more densely settled here than other regions? Why?
   - Do people live differently in higher regions than lower regions? If so, how?

At Home in Lesotho [P, Rel, Reg]

Focus: the relationship between environment and Lesotho house design
Resources: story excerpt, "Saturday Afternoon Tea," p. 46; worksheets, "At Home in Lesotho," p. 47, and "Making Connections between Geography and Architecture," p. 48

Background:

House design in Lesotho reflects this country's history, culture, and geography. The traditional *rondavel* (round house) is still much in favor outside of towns and cities. The western-style rectangular house is especially common in urban areas and reflects access to modern building materials.

A note on Basotho names in "Saturday Afternoon Tea:" like all married women, Malineo received a new last name *and* a new first name upon marriage. In Lesotho, the bride's mother-in-law bestows the new first name, which always begins with the prefix "*Ma*." Malineo's name means "mother-of-gifts." In the Basotho tradition, Malineo's first child would thus be called "Lineo" (de-NAY-oh), which means "Gifts."

Activities:

*1. Challenge students to come up with a speculative description (plus sketch) of a traditional *rondavel*, as based on information from the story excerpt, "Saturday Afternoon Tea." After students have read the passage, ask them to work in small groups to search the text for clues related to the following questions:

   - What shape is a *rondavel*? Why?
   - How big is it?
   - How many rooms does it have?
   - What are the walls made of? roof? floor?
   - How is it made?
   - What might it look like inside?
   - Where is it located?

   Have students make a sketch to accompany their description. Share the written descriptions and drawings as a class, then compare them to the information and sketch on the worksheet, "At Home in Lesotho," p. 47.

2. Have students make connections between environment and house design by completing the worksheet, "Making Connections Between Geography and Architecture," p. 48. This activity can be done individually or in pairs. As this worksheet encourages creative thinking, answers may vary. Have students share the geographical reasoning they used in reaching their conclusions.

Extension:

1. Challenge students to come up with a written description (plus sketch) of what housing might look like in their community if only local resources were available. You may want to limit the challenge to *natural* resources. Alternately, press for the creative over the practical: what cheap *man-made materials*

(*e.g.*, tin cans, styrofoam, crushed metal) are readily available, and what would a shelter made out of these materials look like?

2. Have students analyze a typical shelter in their community, either historic or contemporary. Ask them to note the ways its size, shape, and materials reflect the demands of the local environment in terms of climate, culture, and resources.

3. Have your class research the types of shelters North Americans built when they were obliged to use only locally available natural resources. Students could research the shelter designs of early European settlers (*e.g.*, sod homes, log cabins), and/or those of Native American peoples and native Hawaiians. The focus of research can be similar to that in extension activity #2.

4. Ask your Volunteer to describe the type of shelter in which he or she lives. Also inquire about housing design in general in his or her host country:

    - If there is a traditional design, how does it reflect the demands of the environment?
    - How do the building materials reflect the types of natural resources available? If the materials are not local, where do they come from? (Your class may want to map the import routes.)
    - Are there western-style houses in his or her region as well? Where are they located? Who lives there? What attitude(s) do people in this country have toward this kind of housing?
    - What modifications, if any, have been made to the western-style house so that it better suits the local environment?

Cattle Culture [Rel, P]

Focus: the cultural, economic, and environmental impact of cattle in Lesotho
Resource: worksheet, "Cattle Culture," p. 49

Background:

The Basotho have been cattle herders for generations. Cattle ownership has been an important aspect of ethnic identity and dignity since the founding of the nation in the early 19th century. Today, cattle still play a vital role in Basotho culture, at least in rural areas. Rural Basotho regard cattle primarily as a sign of wealth and status; their potential as a food source is secondary. The accompanying worksheet introduces students to some of the ways cattle still figure in the cultural and economic practices of traditional Lesotho.

Activities:

1. Have students analyze the role(s) of cattle in Lesotho by completing the worksheet, "Cattle Culture," p. 49. This handout asks students to identify some of the many ways cows meet the physical and cultural needs of the Basotho people. Remind students that the worksheet describes the culture of *rural* Basotho. Why would cattle play a less important role in the *urban* economy and culture?

    After your class has completed the worksheet, ask them to identify which descriptions refer primarily to *cultural* needs, and which refer to *physical* needs. Of these *needs*, how many are shared by people in the United States? *(all)* For which of these needs do we also use the cow? *(food, clothing)*. What are some of the resources we use to meet the other needs?

    Answers to worksheet:

    1. g *2. f* *3. d* *4. h* *5. a, c* *6. g* *7. e*
    8. b, h *9. c*

2. Engage your students in a listening exercise which addresses the positive and negative implications of cattle culture on other aspects of life in Lesotho. As follow-up to the worksheet, remind students that an item with great importance in a culture (such as Lesotho's cow) directly and indirectly influences other

aspects of life as well. Tell them you are going to read four statements about Lesotho. For each one, students should decide whether the impact of cattle culture has been positive, negative, or neutral. Discuss answers, which may vary. Here are the four statements:

- There are more than half a million cows in Lesotho, as well as over three million sheep and goats. This amount of livestock in such a small country has caused much of the land to become overgrazed by up to 300%. The result is serious soil erosion which in turns puts more pressure on the remaining land.

- Cattle grazing in harvested fields in winter fertilize the soil for the next year's planting.

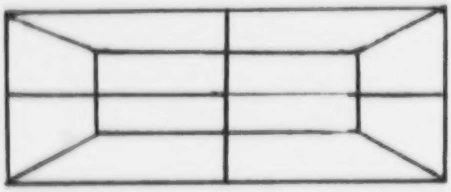
- The Basotho tradition of cattle grazing reflects a cultural pattern of land use. In Lesotho, most land is held by the king for use by all people. Generally, one does not own land in Lesotho; it belongs to everyone. Thus, grazing lands are shared and there are few fences.

- In spring and summer, Basotho graze their cattle on land that is not suitable for cultivation. Usually this means the cattle are taken high into the mountains. Since there are no fences, herdboys must keep an eye on the cows. These boys stay away from home for months at a time. Many never have an opportunity to attend school, while others can only enroll at a late age.

3. Play a Basotho board game of strategy and skill, a favorite of herdboys. *Moraboraba* (moh-RAH-boh-RAH-bah) is an excellent thinking game for both boys and girls. *Moraboraba* can be so involving, in fact, that adults frequently admonish the herdboys not to play the game, less it distract them from their responsibilities. Special thanks to Volunteer Christina Carlson for the information below:

   Materials: *Moraboraba* game board (see below) and 24 game pieces.

   Game pieces are often 12 light colored stones and 12 dark colored stones or two different types of pods, nuts, or bottle tops. (Often the stones are thought of as two herds of cows). The game board may be drawn in the soil, on paper, or do what the Basotho boys do -- carve it into a large flat rock that you can sit around for playing. The game board should look like this:



   Number of players: two or four (two teams of two players)

   Instructions: The two players take turns placing a stone on each of the places where the lines intersect, trying to get three stones of the same color in a row. You also try to block your opponent from getting three stones across (similar to Tic-Tac-Toe). If a player does get three in a row he or she can then remove one of his or her opponent's stones. This continues until all 24 pieces are played on the board.

   The game continues as you take turns moving your stones, again trying for three in a row. This time you can only move your piece from one intersection of lines to the next, no jumping over lines or stones. To make the game even more of a thinking game, the rules say you cannot count the middle intersection as part of three in a row. The winner is the one who has collected all his or her opponents stones (cows) and says: *"ke o hlotse,"* (kay-oo-KLOH-tsee) which means, "I've beaten you!"

Extension:

1. Ask students to compare/contrast animal wealth with monetary wealth. Give pairs of students a brief time to brainstorm advantages/disadvantages of using cows as symbols of wealth rather than cash. Discuss their ideas, also addressing the following questions:
   - Is one form of wealth always preferable to another? Why or why not?
   - What might geography have to do with the symbol of wealth a region adopts?
   - Why might urban and (isolated) rural places make different choices?

2. Ask your Volunteer what has been considered a traditional sign of wealth and status in his or her country. How has it affected how people live and use their environment? What is its relationship to the cash culture?

3. Have your students send your Volunter written instructions on how to play *Moraboraba*. Ask him or her to send instructions about how to play a game from his or her country.

Environmental Crisis: Soil Erosion [Rel, P]

Focus: causes, consequences, and remediations of soil erosion in Lesotho
Resource: worksheet, "Lesotho in Crisis: Soil Erosion," p. 50

Background:

Soil erosion is a serious environmental problem in Lesotho. The natural proclivity of Lesotho's terrain toward erosion is compounded by physical and cultural factors related to human settlement. Approximately two percent of topsoil is lost *each year* to the ravages of weather and overgrazing. This is an alarming rate for an agrarian country whose topography limits cultivation to only 13% of the total land area. In Lesotho, soil is carried away both by wind and water. Dust storms are common during the winter dry season when cultivated fields lie bare. Hard rains during summer wash soil from overgrazed, treeless slopes. Run-off from Lesotho's steep mountains carves into the flat plains below. Deep erosion gulleys called *dongas* cut through these more fertile lands, preventing some areas from being farmed.

Efforts have been made for many years to curb erosion, though with limited success. In the mountains, farmers terrace their fields and plow along the contours of the slopes. Tree planting projects have been initiated throughout the country, but the daily press for brush and firewood limits their effectiveness. Reducing animal herds in the country is widely recognized as a key step in managing the erosion; however, the cultural significance of cattle makes reduction of overgrazing particularly difficult. Assisting the Lesotho Government in its efforts to curb erosion is one way Volunteers serve this nation.

Activities:

1. Have students identify the ways in which the physical and cultural geography of Lesotho contribute to its soil erosion crisis. Ask them to read the background information on the worksheet, p. 50. Then have them work in pairs to answer the questions which follow. Discuss the answers with your class afterwards. Also, ask students to identify which of the worksheet's descriptions refer to *physical* causes of erosion, which to *cultural* causes, and which to both. Answers may vary.

2. Have small groups of students brainstorm ways soil erosion in Lesotho could be prevented or reversed, basing their solutions on what they have learned about its causes. Have groups share their ideas as a class. Write the suggestions on the chalkboard. Ask students to identify which suggestions involve physical changes and which involve cultural changes. Which ideas do they think would be the easiest to implement in Lesotho? Which would be the most difficult? Why?

Extension:

1. Have students identify areas of erosion in their own community. Encourage them to find examples of erosion caused by both physical and cultural factors.

- Which have causes similar to Lesotho's?
- Which have causes different from Lesotho's?
- What role does water play, both positive and negative, in these erosion situations?
- What actions would be needed to curb this soil loss? Are they practical?

2. Have students research causes and consequences of soil erosion in the United States, either in the past (*e.g.*, "The Dust Bowl,") or the present. Students might also find out about soil loss in other countries, such as that related to deforestation and desertification.

3. Inform your Volunteer about the physical and cultural causes of soil erosion in Lesotho. Ask whether his or her country has an erosion problem as well.

    - If so, where does the erosion occur?
    - What are its causes? What are its consequences?
    - What affect does water have on this problem, both positive and negative?
    - What attempts are being made to slow the process, if any?

Regional Differences: Schooling [Reg, P, Rel]

Focus: similarities and differences between schools in the rural highlands and urban lowlands
Resource: worksheet, "Alikes and Differences: Schooling in Lesotho," p. 51

Background:

This activity is an appropriate *conclusion exercise* because it asks students to apply what they have learned about Lesotho in a sorting task. Students will need to consider the role physical geography has played in shaping the daily experiences of two girls in secondary school. The experience of students in urban Maseru is not all that different from that of their contemporaries in the United States. On the other hand, Basotho students attending school in the mountains often have more in common with rural American youth at the turn of the century. First, the low population density in the highlands means most secondary schools in this region are boarding schools. Second, the rugged terrain of Lesotho's interior means many of these schools lack access to electricity, running water, and educational materials. Even teachers can be in short supply. For more information, please refer to the education section, p. 11, in Part I of this guide.

A few other notes related to the sorting activity: unlike the United States, the majority of schools are church-sponsored, although run in conjunction with the Lesotho government. All students wear uniforms according to the colors of their school (shirt and trousers for boys, dresses for girls). Regardless of their geographical location, many secondary schools offer extracurricular clubs, such as Scouts, as well as sports. Lastly, as many schools cannot afford a support staff, students are expected to help with the physical upkeep of facilities and grounds.

Activities:

1. Have your students work in pairs to sort the activities of two Basotho school girls, basing their decisions on knowledge about the highland and lowland regions. This activity works best if students cut the items from the list, so as to be able to physically manipulate them on their desktops.

    Once they have completed the sort, have the pairs share their answers in groups of four to six. Charge each group to come up with a collective answer. Have these groups share their solutions with the class. Discuss answers and solicit reactions to the information conveyed in the sort. Solutions may vary, so stress the geographical reasoning behind the decisions made. (*i.e.*, What is it about Lesotho's geography and/or culture that lead you to sort this item in this way?)

2. Ask students to consider which activities a schoolgirl in the United States might share in common with her Basotho counterparts. Have them create a Venn diagram which illustrates some of the differences and similarities among students in rural and urban Lesotho, and those in the United States. Students could affix

the items to a large piece of paper on which three overlapping circles are drawn. Have your students analyze and discuss the results:

- Is there any pattern to the activities U.S. students share in common with urban Basotho students? *(Many shared activities are related to a common, developed infrastructure.)*
- How similar would the experiences of U.S. students and rural Basotho students be if in the United States, as in rural Lesotho, schools lacked access to electricity and running water? What would still be different? Why? *(Some of the differences reflect cultural particularities.)*
- Is there a pattern to the activities students in all three regions share in common? *(Items related to schooling and religion reflect the way these institutions in both countries trace their origins to Western Europe; many of the other items reflect human qualities shared by schoolchildren in almost every land.)*

Extension:

1. Send a copy of the Venn diagram (Activity #2) to your Volunteer. Ask him or her to indicate which school activities are also shared by students in his or her country. What are some items found in the Volunteer's culture that are neither part of Lesotho or the United States, *i.e.*, what is particular? Ask your Volunteer to send your class a similar kind of Venn diagram comparing schooling in his or her country with that of the United States.

Activities
Grades 10-12

Winter in the Highlands [P, M, Reg]

Focus: geography of Lesotho's highlands in winter
Resource: story excerpt, "The Snow Mama," pp. 52-54

Background:

This non-fiction story, written by former Volunteer Elise Sheffield, recounts a journey through the Lesotho highlands after a July snowstorm. Winter in Lesotho, June through August, coincides with the annual dry season. If precipitation does occur during this time, snow may fall anywhere in the country, but especially in the mountains. Although a foot or more may accumulate at the highest elevations, most snow will melt in a few days because of the bright, high altitude sun. The first two activities which follow are designed as an *introduction* to the study of Lesotho.

Activities:

* 1. Introduce your students to some of the geographic paradoxes of Lesotho by having them read the story excerpt, "The Snow Mama," pp. 52-54. Ask them to share their responses afterwards. What did they find surprising about this true account? You may wish to continue your discussion along these lines:

    - Where had the author been during her vacation? In what ways is the geography of those parts of Africa different from Lesotho?
    - Lesotho's winter is not the only surprise in this story. In what way(s) do each of these characters refute stereotypes about Africans: the pilot, the postmistress, the young mother?
    - In your opinion, what might have been some of the author's intentions in recounting this particular experience?

* 2. Challenge your students to develop an overview of Lesotho's cultural and physical geography by analyzing information in the story, "The Snow Mama." Divide your class into groups after they have read the story. Ask each group (or group member) to gather data from the text of the story about one or more specific aspects of Lesotho. Suggested themes:

    - physical and climatic features of lowlands and highlands
    - characteristics of human settlements in both lowlands and highlands
    - modes of transportation in lowlands and highlands
    - ways modern technology is available/not available in the Lesotho highlands
    - Basotho adaptations to life in a cold winter region
    - agricultural characteristics of Lesotho, including kinds and uses of animals

    Have each group work together to compile its information, then have them report their findings to the class, orally or in writing. Discuss. Record questions which are raised. Save these as well as the reports for future reference. It may be interesting to compare these speculations with what students learn about Lesotho later on.

3. Have your students analyze the weather patterns of Lesotho in greater depth by graphing the climatological data on p. 20. Ask your students to look for annual rainfall patterns--Lesotho has a distinct dry season. Can they establish any connections between precipitation and temperature as well? In what other months might snowfall occur? What accounts for the reversal of seasons from North America?

4. Have students research what other regions in Africa experience snowfall. They may first want to consult topographic maps of Africa, then check their predictions against atlases or other reference material.

5. Have students investigate propensity for snowfall in other countries in the world which share Lesotho's latitude. Extend the investigation to countries in both the southern and northern hemisphere. Ask students to identify what other geographic factors affect climate in these snowy countries.

Extension:

1. Ask your Volunteer about climate extremes in his or her country.
    - What is the nature of this extreme?
    - Where, when, and why does it occur?
    - How do residents of the affected region adjust their lives to cope with these conditions?

White Gold: The Lesotho Highlands Water Project [Rel, L, P, M, Reg]

Focus: the environmental, economic, and cultural impact of one of the largest water diversion schemes in Africa

Resources: excerpt from the article, "Taming Highland Waters," p. 55, and accompanying worksheet, "Background Questions," p. 56; topographical map of Lesotho, p. 75; comment sheets, pp. 57-58; flow chart, p. 59.

Background:

An account of this ambitious bi-national project is provided in the section on economy (p. 10) in the teacher information pages of this guide. The worksheets which address this topic (pp. 55-58) are even more detailed. The Lesotho Highland Water Project (LHWP) receives significant attention in this study guide for three reasons. First, it is a major issue related to water use, affecting both Lesotho and South Africa. Second, it is a project inextricably related to the physical geography of southern Africa. Third, the pattern of change resulting from this project is illustrative of modernity's impact on developing regions throughout the world. By analyzing the interplay between physical and cultural change in rural Lesotho, students should be able to recognize similar patterns at work in other lands as well.

Students should be aware that the highlands of Lesotho have been generally inaccessible by vehicle. People travel by plane, foot, or by horseback. *(See p. 21 for more information about transport in Lesotho.)* Lack of an infrastructure has limited this region's access to the outside world and to its wider economy. *(See p. 16 for more information.)* While many men have contact with westernization through their work in the South African mines, the highlands population in general has lived closer to its traditional roots than people of the lowlands.

Thus, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project and its attendant construction have already brought many changes to the area in just a few short years. When the story, "The Snow Mama," was written about this same region in 1988, access to the Malibamatso (mah-dee-bah-MAH-tsoh) River Valley was virtually limited to air. Now a paved road links the capital of Maseru to the outpost of Mamohau in a three-hour drive. The Malibamatso River, coincidentally, is one of the rivers in the Maluti watershed that will be dammed as part of this project; part of the track mentioned in the story is expected to be under several hundred feet of water once this project is completed in about the year 2020.

Activities:

1. For background on this topic, have students read the excerpt from the article, "Taming Highland Waters," p. 55. Then have them complete the accompanying question sheet, p. 56. They will need to refer to the map on p. 75.

2. Have students consider the different perspectives people bring to this development project. Ask your class to read comments by both project developers and local villagers, as recorded on pp. 57-58. Evaluate the perspectives as a class or in groups. Points for discussion:

- What is the point of view of the planners? of the villagers?
- On what points do both sides seem to agree?
- How are the concerns/interests expressed by the villagers different from those of the planners?
- How do you account for this difference of perspective?
- How might one evaluate the worthiness of such a project when, as in this case, a difference in opinions/perspectives is represented? By what criteria would you judge?
- Road construction is a key concern in all perspectives represented. Not surprisingly, the prospect of building roads into the highlands is perceived as a mixed blessing by the villagers themselves:
  --What benefits do they foresee from having good roads?
  --What drawbacks have they experienced and/or do they anticipate?
  --What is *your* opinion about the changes a developed infrastructure will bring?
- Another concern shared by the villagers relates to health:
  --How might the health of communities and individuals be improved by the project?
  --How might health be impaired?
  --Again, what is *your* evaluation about the impact on health? Is it more positive or negative?

3. Have students analyze how the LHWP will affect the region's environment, economy, and culture. Ask them to complete the flow chart on p. 59. Instruct your students to fill each square with one or more examples (or predictions) of the kind of change specified. Students should base their responses on information gleaned from the previous handouts, pp. 55-58, but will need to draw from their own ideas at times. Have students work in small groups to complete this exercise so that they may benefit from shared brainstorming.

   Discuss answers as a class afterwards. Responses will vary, so have students explain their reasoning. Also emphasize the interrelationship of cause and effects. The flow chart is meant to illustrate the interconnectedness of physical and cultural change. In this situation, change to the physical environment because of road construction affects the local economy, which in turn affects traditional ways of life, and so on. One way to draw student attention to this pattern of interdependence is to ask them to articulate the links between seemingly disparate events. For example, what might be the connections between construction of the Katse Dam and increased local sales of alcohol, or the influx of tourism and the spread of AIDS?

4. After examining the pros and cons of the LHWP as a class, ask students to write an essay of persuasion in which they support an opinion on one of the following statements about the Project:

   - "The Lesotho Highlands Water Project is in the best interest of Lesotho."
   - "Bringing roads to the isolated highlands has more drawbacks than benefits."
   - "The Lesotho Highlands Water Project will enable Lesotho to become more economically and politically independent of the Republic of South Africa."

Extension:

1. Have students research the physical and cultural impact of other large earth-transformative projects in other lands. How have the physical changes resulting from these projects affected the local environment, economy, and way(s) of life? Suggested topics:

   TVA Dams
   California Gold Rush
   Quebec-Labrador Hydroelectric Project
   Colorado River irrigation
   Aswan Dam project in Egypt
   Logging and mining along the Amazon river

2. Have students identify a *specific* local or regional land use issue on which people have different perspectives. Analyze the impact of the land change on other aspects of life, in an exercise similar to the flow chart. Challenge students to evaluate the perspectives and form their own opinions. Possible subjects include construction or location of:

   landfills
   airports
   housing developments
   ski/beach resorts
   toxic dumpsites
   industries
   new roads/highways
   dams

3. Have students write an essay of persuasion in which they support an opinion on a land use controversy related to any of the subjects suggested in the #1 and #2 extension exercises.

4. Ask your Volunteer about land use controversies in his or her country. What different perspectives do people bring to the issue? Why?

5. Ask your Volunteer whether all regions in his or her country have equal access to roads and related infrastructure. If not, what role has geography played in creating barriers to movement? How do these less accessible regions differ, culturally and/or physically, from other regions in the country?

Lesotho's Migrant Workers [M, L, P, Rel]

Focus: economic patterns of movement related to location of natural resources in southern Africa
Resources: poem, "Men Flow Like Rivers," p. 60, and accompanying worksheet questions, "Digging Deeper," p. 61

Background:

With an economy hindered by few natural resources (other than water), Lesotho's greatest export is human labor. At any one time, over 200,000 Basotho men and women will be living and working across the border in industrial South Africa. While some women are employed as domestics, most migrant workers are men. Almost half the country's total male labor force works in South Africa. Of these, over 100,000 are contracted laborers in South Africa's giant mining industry, which employs more than half a million people from throughout the southern Africa region. More than a third of all households in Lesotho rely on these remitted wages as their main source of income. Households in the mountains are even more dependent on this income than those in the lowlands.

Students should be aware that until very recently, Basotho employed in South Africa have been obliged to live under its system of apartheid. This system of racial segregation, instituted by South Africa's white minority government, has discriminated against the black majority through a variety of laws and practices. Thus, although Lesotho itself is a nation free of racial division, the daily reality for many of its citizens has been quite different. The bitterness against such a system can be felt in the poem, "Men Flow Like Rivers." Students should also be aware, however, that since 1990, when this poem was written, South Africa has begun to take its first steps toward a non-apartheid, multi-racial democratic future. It is unclear at this time how such changes will affect Lesotho's economy or the situation of its migrant workers and their families.

Activity:

1. Have your students analyze the poem, "Men Flow Like Rivers," to gather information about migrant labor in Lesotho. This poem is best read aloud. Have students answer the worksheet questions, p. 61. Discuss.

Extension:

1. Have your students research patterns of migrant labor in the United States, either historical or current.

   - What economic regions of the country rely on migrant labor? Why?
   - What is life like for migrant laborers in the United States?
   - How is it similar/dissimilar to that of Basotho laborers? (*See below for related questions.*)

2. Ask your Volunteer about migrant labor in his or her country.

   - If it is part of the economy, do workers leave or enter the country?
   - What are the geographic and economic reasons for this movement? How is it related to the location of natural resources?
   - Who are the migrant workers? What do they do? What is life like for them?
   - What impact(s) does the movement of workers in the Volunteer's host country have on its culture?

When Americans and Basotho Meet: The Challenges of Cross-Cultural Understanding [M]

Focus: the challenges and rewards of cross-cultural encounters; how cross-cultural misunderstandings arise, and how they are managed.

Resources: comment sheets, "When Americans and Basotho Meet" with questions for discussion, pp. 62-64; worksheet, "The Basotho: Stereotype Busters," p. 65

Background:

With the advent of modern travel and communications, people of the world's cultures come into contact with one another more often than ever before. Understanding another culture, however, is not always as easily accomplished as travelling to it. Peace Corps Volunteers know firsthand the challenges and rewards that come from living closely with people whose culture differs in some ways from their own.

Many Volunteers in Lesotho discover that exploring cultural differences also involves examining issues related to race. While experiences vary with the individual, former Volunteers Consuella Brown and Elise Sheffield both found this process to be a challenging one. In their experience, gaining a cross-cultural understanding with Basotho involved a sometimes painful appraisal of how culture and race figure in the perceptions of others.

The essays by Consuella and Elise, pp. 62-64, have been included in this study guide with three purposes in mind: *first*, to provide students with particular information about the challenges two individual Americans faced in learning to live in harmony with their Basotho host culture; *second*, to address the ways in which diverse cultural perspectives contribute to misunderstandings between people and how such misunderstandings can be diffused or managed; and *third*, to provide a constructive forum for students to reflect on how misperceptions and stereotypes impede genuine understanding of others in their own lives.

As issues of race and ethnicity are sensitive topics, you are urged to evaluate the following activities in light of the needs and interests of your own students. The first and second activities solicit student responses to the Volunteer essays. The third activity asks students to examine some possible misperceptions about Basotho. The extension activities offer ideas for linking the theme of cross-cultural understanding with the daily experiences of your students. As you are aware, it is especially important to present these particular activities in a constructive and non-threatening manner.

Activities:

1. Have your students analyze how cultural misunderstandings can arise, and be managed, between Americans and Basotho. Ask them to read the personal reflections on race and culture by two former Volunteers, pp. 62-64. Have students answer the boxed questions which follow each essay. Discuss responses as a class.

2. Engage your students in a lively open-ended discussion about issues raised by these essays by having them complete, in pairs, the Agree/Disagree section at the bottom of p. 64. Encourage your students to evaluate the statements according to their own opinions. After a pair completes the exercise, ask the partners to team up with a second pair, to arrive at a group concensus. Then discuss the statements as a class. Bear in mind the goal of this exercise has been for students to wrestle with ideas. Responses will vary; have students share the reasoning behind their decisions.

3. Have your students recall ways their limited knowledge of Lesotho led to initial misperceptions about the Basotho people. What were some of those misperceptions? How have those stereotypes been challenged (or reinforced) by their subsequent study of Lesotho? Now ask your students to complete the worksheet, "The Basotho: Stereotype Busters," p. 65. This activity is designed for small group or class discussion.

Extension:

1. Have students analyze examples of stereotype-based misunderstandings from their own experiences. Depending on your class, you may wish to address many forms of stereotyping (*e.g.*, by age, gender, social class) or keep the activity focused on culture and race. In either case, ask students to write about a specific

instance in which they, or someone they knew (either personally, or through the media), were involved in a misunderstanding arising from stereotyped misperceptions. Points for reflection:

- In what way had the stereotype misrepresented this person?
- What was the result of this misrepresentation?
- How was the conflict caused by the misperceptions resolved or managed? How *could* this conflict have been managed constructively if it was not?

Invite individual students to share their analyses with the class, *if the classroom atmosphere is conducive to such an approach.* Alternatively, ask students to indicate on their papers whether they would be willing to have their comments read to the class anonymously.

2. Have students identify other examples of conflicts arising from cultural misperceptions within the United States. Remind students that the United States is a nation built by the coming together of peoples from different cultures. To many, the cultural diversity of the United States that is its strength also at times has been the source of its weaknesses. History points to many instances in which individuals and groups of people have been the objects of injustice related to racial or cultural stereotyping. Have students research these "low points" of American history. Ask them to focus on how the stereotyped party was misperceived, what injustices resulted because of those misperceptions, and how those injustices have since been righted. Examples of research topics:

   - internment of Japanese Americans in World World II
   - denial of civil rights to African Americans
   - forced relocation of Native Americans in early American history
   - denial of suffrage to women
   - persecution of various religious sects in early American history

   Some classes may want to analyze instances of current cultural misunderstanding within the United States.

3. Ask your Volunteer about personal experiences with cross-cultural understanding (and misunderstandings) in his or her country.

   - Has the Volunteer been misperceived? If so, how?
   - Has the Volunteer misperceived others? If so, how?
   - How has he or she resolved or learned to manage these cultural misunderstandings?
   - What has your Volunteer learned about his or her *own* culture while living abroad?
   - What has his or her "adopted" culture taught your Volunteer that is different from the cultural ways of the United States?

Urban Ways vs. Rural Ways: The Impact of Modernity [Reg, P, Rel]

Focus: the impact of "the electric culture" on urban and rural ways of life, as illustrated by changes in Basotho courtship customs

Resource: excerpt from the essay, "The Mosotho Child Today," p. 66

Background:

In this piece, Patrick Bereng, a Mosotho professor at the National University of Lesotho, examines the role of "the electric culture" in shaping the habits and values of young urban Basotho. As Bereng points out, Lesotho straddles two worlds: the traditional world of the village and the westernized world of its urban areas. Because of its geographic particularities, Lesotho has perhaps experienced the gulf between "old" and "new" more so than other nations. On one hand, Lesotho is literally surrounded by a westernized industrial nation, South Africa. Cosmopolitan life in the capital city of Maseru reflects that association; access to television and cinema also links this urban area to the global culture of modernity. On the other hand, many rural areas of

Lesotho lack access to roads and electricity and are therefore as cut off from the western world as much as Maseru is connected.

In Bereng's opinion, the cultural disparity between Lesotho's two geographic regions can easily create "a young man and woman in town [who] is a rather confused product of tradition and modernity together." (*I Am a Mosotho*, p. 93) In the excerpt reprinted on p. 66, Bereng makes his point with an anecdote about a young woman who eschews traditional courtship customs for those more modern.

Activities:

1. Have your students consider the impact of the "electric culture" (*i.e.*, modernity) on traditional social relations in Lesotho in the essay excerpt, "The Mosotho Child Today." Have students discuss answers to these questions:

    - In what way does Grace stay true to her traditional upbringing, even in the city?
    - What are two or three ways Grace lives like a modern "European" girl in the city?
    - What does Grace's mother mean by her reference to cat and mouse? How does this comment reflect her opinions about modern dating? How does her view differ from Grace's?
    - Mr. Bereng refers to Grace as practicing "the electric culture." What does he mean by this? How has "the electric culture" affected traditional courtship customs in Lesotho?
    - What is Mr. Bereng's implied opinion about "the electric culture?" Would his opinion reflect that of all Basotho? Why or why not?

    Take the discussion a step further by asking students to consider the following statement: "The differences between Grace and her mother are more generational than cultural." Do your students agree? Disagree? Why? In what ways can generations be thought of as cultures in themselves? Ask your students to give examples of cultural differences between their generation and that of their parents.

2. Ask your students to consider the impact of the "electric culture" on other aspects of Basotho life. Have your students contrast life in urban Lesotho with life in rural (non-electric) Lesotho. Ask them to predict how the following aspects of life might differ in these two regions:

    - rhythm of daily life (*e.g.*, sleep and work cycles)
    - food storage and preparation
    - role of women and girls (and/or men and boys)
    - forms of entertainment
    - schooling
    - housing
    - economy

Extension:

1. Have students brainstorm ways in which the "electric culture" has also shaped the conduct of their own lives. Divide your class into small groups. Give each group a short period of time to come up with a list of how their lives would change without electricity. You may want to give each group a different topic for focus, for example: changes in social life, home life, school life, economic life, in uses of leisure time.

    Have each group share its predictions with the class as a whole. In the discussion, emphasize the way "the electric culture" affects the totality of our modern experience. In what ways would their non-electric lives be similar to those of their great-grandparents? In what ways would they still be different? Give students a writing assignment related to these topics of discussion.

2. Ask your Volunteer whether he or she has access to electricity. If not, why not? How has the non-electric life changed your Volunteer's daily routines?

3. Ask your Volunteer to tell about the courtship customs in his or her country. Are there different expectations in rural and urban areas or in different regions of the country?

Basotho Speak Out: Education [Reg, P]

Focus: schooling in Lesotho: comments and critiques
Resources: comment sheets, "How I Would Change My Education," p. 67 and "Life Without Education," p. 68.

Background:

Please refer to the section on education in the teacher information pages of this study guide (p. 11). Special thanks to the Lesotho newsletter, Work for Justice, for allowing reprinting of the articles used in these activities.

Activities:

1. Have students compare and contrast the Basotho experience of schooling with their own by reading the comments of two school attenders on p. 67. Before they read, you may want to share information about schooling in Lesotho on p. 11 of the teacher information section. Both Puleng, a girl, and Joseph attend secondary schools in urban areas; you may wish to have students locate their towns on the map. (Mohale's Hoek is a regional capital in the south.)

   Remind students that these comments are not translated; they are reproduced as written. (Would your students be able to express themselves so well in a second language? What must it be like to do all one's learning in a second language so very different from one's home language?)

   When your class has read the comment sheet, solicit general reactions. Then ask your class to respond, either orally or in writing, to the following questions:

   - What surprised you about these comments?
   - Which comments seem to refer to things specifically related to Lesotho's culture?
   - Which comments seem to be equally true to your experience of school in the United States?
   - What changes would *you* like to see in *your* education?

   These questions can be used to generate discussion among the whole class. Alternatively, ask small groups to discuss them, reporting back to the class at the end. The fourth question works well as an essay assignment, reflecting either the individual or group response.

2. Have students compare and contrast the school drop-out problem in Lesotho with that in the United States. Ask them to read the comments of two school leavers on p. 68. Both of these young men are from rural backgrounds; their stories probably have been translated from Sesotho. (*Note:* a "cafe" is a small grocery shop, not a restaurant, and standard 6 is equivalent to sixth grade.) Once students have read the comments, solicit general reactions. Then pose the following questions for class or group discussion. The fourth and seventh questions would work well as essay topics.

   - In what ways are the life stories of these two men similar?
   - What prevented Pascalis from ever attending school?
   - What caused Seabaka to drop out?
   - How are the above reasons for discontinuing education similar and/or dissimilar to reasons in the United States?
   - What attitude do both men have about not completing their education?
   - What benefits do they see for being educated in Lesotho?
   - How are their attitudes about getting an education similar and/or dissimilar to those of school leavers in the United States?

Extension:

1. Send letters to your Volunteer explaining why students drop-out in the United States and/or Lesotho. Ask your Volunteer to indicate which reasons are similar to those in his or her country; are there other reasons as well? If your Volunteer has access to an English medium school, request him or her to share your letters with students; ask for their reactions.

Part III: Resources

What Sort of Lesotho?

Directions: Underline the items which you think you would find in the African country of Lesotho. Then wait for further directions from your teacher.

cars

farmers

ponies

wild rhebok (animal)

herdboys

churches

Basotho blankets

5 *maloti* bill (money)

snowmen

elementary schools

movie theaters

soccer fields

a ski slope

telephones

Sesotho songs

airplane landing strips

ice cream

round stone huts

kerosene lamps

hot showers

maize (corn) fields

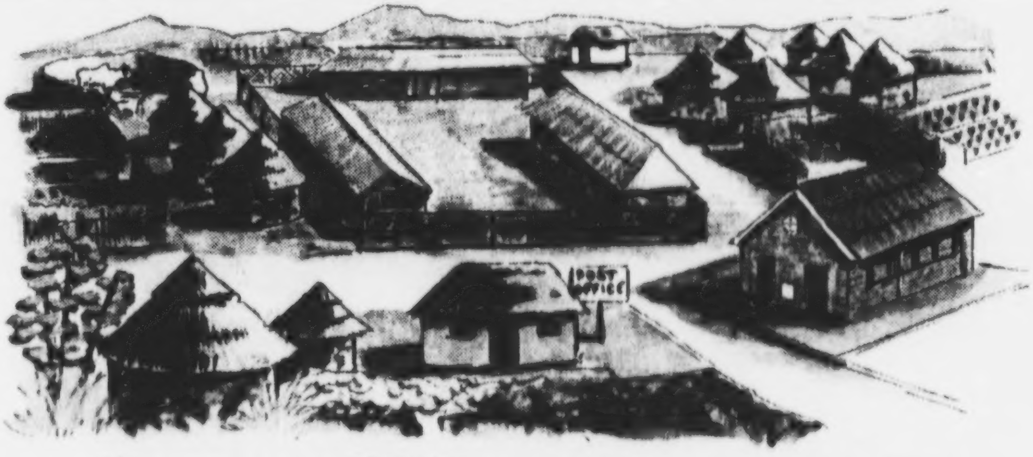
computers

televisions

a university

Sefako's School and Village Plan

Here is a plan of a school and a village in Lesotho. A boy named Sefako (say-FAH-koh) lives here. Maybe he was born during a hailstorm because his name means hail! This map comes from a social studies book used by children in Lesotho. Look at the map. Can you find the compass? Now answer the questions on the worksheet.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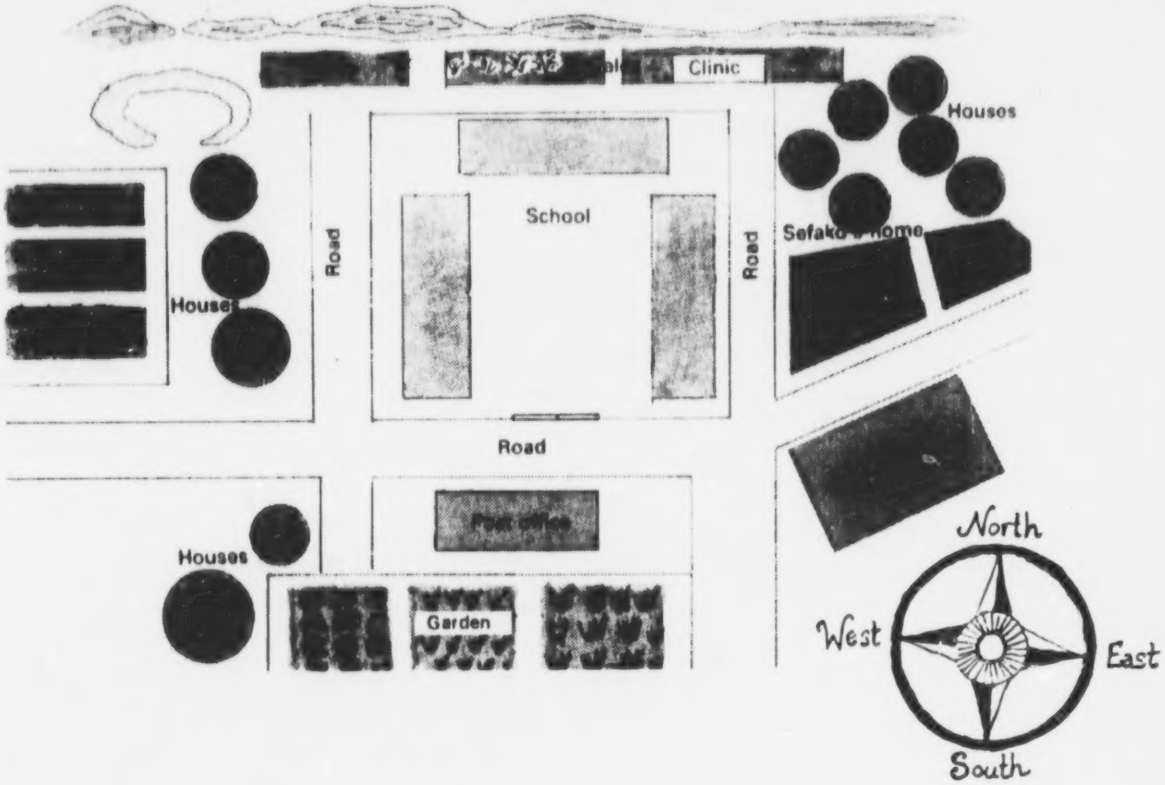
Clinic
Houses
School
Road
Road
Sefako's home
Houses
Road
Houses
Post office
Garden
North
West
East
South

Adapted and reprinted with permission from *Lesotho Social Studies, Standard 4*, F. Mokhitli; M. Morojele; M. Baholo; K. Tsekoa, London, G.B.: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991.

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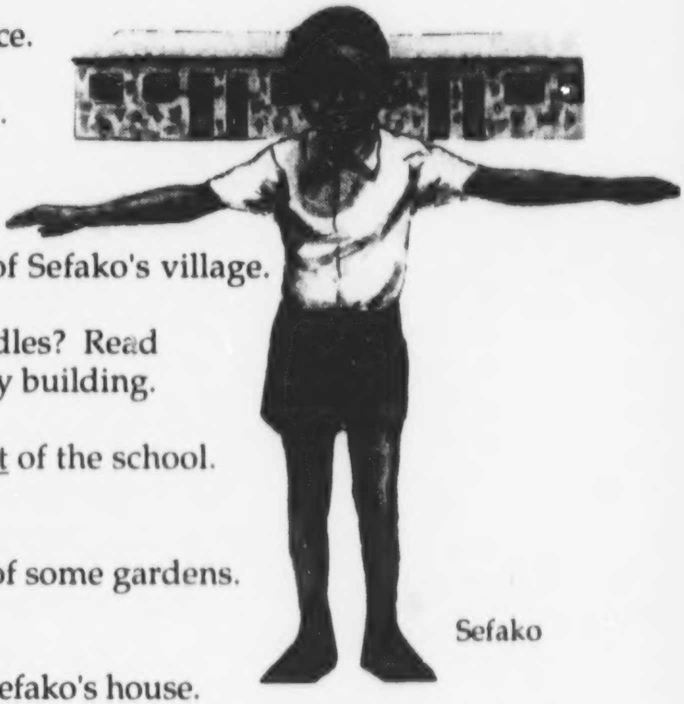
Sefako's School and Village Plan

Part I Directions: Here are some sentences which describe where things are in the village. Some of these sentences are **false.** Can you find them? When you do, cross out the wrong direction and correct the mistake:

1. The school lies east of Sefako's house.
2. The church lies east of the post office.
3. The cattle *kraal* is west of the clinic.
4. The clinic lies north of the school.
5. There are mountains to the south of Sefako's village.



Sefako

Part II Directions: Can you solve these riddles? Read the clues, then write the name of the mystery building.

6. I am east of some gardens and west of the school.
   I am a ______________.
7. I am south of the school but north of some gardens.
   I am a ______________.
8. I am east of the school but south of Sefako's house.
   I am a ______________.

Part III Directions: Answer these brain-busters. Good luck!

9. Is it morning or afternoon in this picture? How can you tell?

10. Would you be able to watch the sun set while standing in front of the church doors? Why or why not?

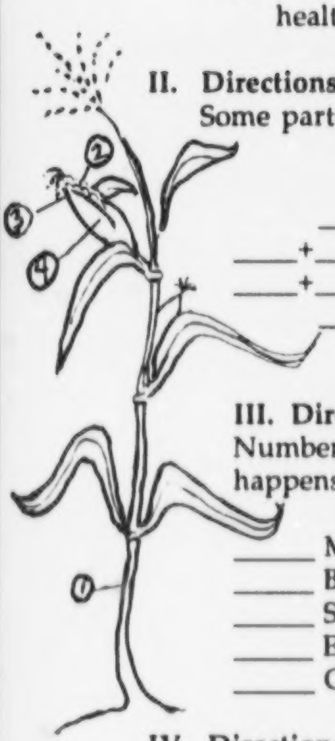
11. What season of the year might this be? Why do you think so?

Graphic adapted and reprinted with permission from *Lesotho Social Studies, Standard 4*, F. Mokhitli; M. Morojele; M. Baholo; K. Tsekoa, London, G.B.: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991.

Amazing Maize

I. Directions: Circle the correct definition of a staple food:

a. A food that falls apart unless you staple it together (like a taco!).
b. A food that is eaten a lot in a country, usually because it grows easily and is healthy to eat (like maize in Lesotho).



II. Directions: Match the parts of the maize (corn) plant with its uses. Some parts have morethan one use.

___1. sweet stalks
____+___2. kernels
____+___3. dry husks and stalks
___4. maize ears

(a) planted in the soil for a new crop
(b) kids chew it
(c) food for animals
(d) roofs for cattle *kraals*
(e) ground into maize meal
(f) roasted on the cob over a fire

III. Directions: Growing maize happens the same way every year in Lesotho. Number these farming activities in the proper order (1-5), beginning with what first happens in spring.

_____ Men and women sow the seeds by hand into the upturned soil.
_____ Boys plow the fields with oxen.
_____ Sheep and goats graze in the fields after the harvest.
_____ Everybody helps cut the maize with curved blades called scythes.
_____ Girls and women hoe the weeds from the rows of maize.

IV. Directions: Study this school lunch menu from Lesotho. How many different ways will students eat their staple food this week?

Monday	**Maize porridge with dried fruit**
Tuesday	**Maize papa and beans or pea soup**
Wednesday	**Maize papa and vegetables**
Thursday	**Maize porridge and soup**
Friday	**Maize papa and beans or pea soup**

Menu adapted and reprinted with permission from *Lesotho Social Studies, Standard 4*, F. Mokhitli; M. Morojele; M. Baholo; K. Tsekoa, London. G.B.: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991.

Using Water Every Day

Directions: Here is a story about a girl named Palesa (pah-LAY-sah), whose name means "flower." Palesa lives in a rural village in the lowlands. Read about a day in her life. Watch for ways she and her family use water. Underline each way you find.

Early in the morning, Palesa wakes up and goes to fetch water at the water tank in her village. When she returns fifteen minutes later, her mother has already started a fire in the hearth. Mapalesa, her mother, heats up some water so Palesa can take a sponge bath before going to school. She boils water in another pot so she can stir in maize meal and make *papa* for breakfast. Palesa eats fast so she won't be late for school. She hands her empty bowl to her mother and runs down the hill to catch up with her friends.

Now Mapalesa begins her morning chores. First, she washes the dishes with the remaining warm water. Then, she pours the used water on the spinach in her garden since she does not want to waste anything. After this, Mapalesa goes to gather a special kind of soil, as well as some dried cow dung. She will mix these materials with water to make a kind of plaster. It has been two months since she has smoothed the walls and floor of her earth *rondavel*, and the hard surface is starting to crack. Today she smears on a fresh layer of earth plaster. By the time Palesa comes home from school, the fresh coat of special mud is already dry. Her mother has even drawn some designs on the walls.

Quickly Palesa changes out of her school uniform and washes it in a small plastic basin: it must be dry by tomorrow! Then she goes to fetch more water for her family. She has to make two trips, carrying the heavy water on her head each time. At sundown, her brother comes home from tending the cattle all day in the fields. Palesa helps Thabo (TAH-boh), whose name means "happiness." She brings water for the cows now safe in the stone *kraal* by their home.

After dinner, Mapalesa gives her children a special treat: a steaming mug of tea with lots of sugar in it. They drink the tea while sitting around the fire in the center of the one room *rondavel*. They are glad to be warm on this chilly fall evening. Palesa wishes her father were there to tell them stories, but he is far away in South Africa, working in the mines. Like many fathers in Lesotho, he won't be home until Christmas, and that is a long time away.

Pula! Pula! Pula! Pula! Pula! Pula! Pula! Pula!

Directions: *Pula* (POO-lah) is the word for rain in Lesotho. It is an important word because rain is often scarce in Lesotho. Study the rainfall chart below to find out when it does and does not rain in Lesotho. Then answer the questions.

1. Could you travel faster on unpaved roads in Lesotho in February or May? Why?

2. Would you be more likely to get dust in your eyes in March or August? Why?

3. Would you rather plant your maize crop in April or September? Why?

4. When it rains during winter, snow often falls in the mountains of Lesotho. This makes it very hard for people who live in the mountains. Luckily, winter in Lesotho happens during the driest three months of the year.

   (a) Which months are these? (*Hint:* They are **not** the same as the winter months in the United States.)

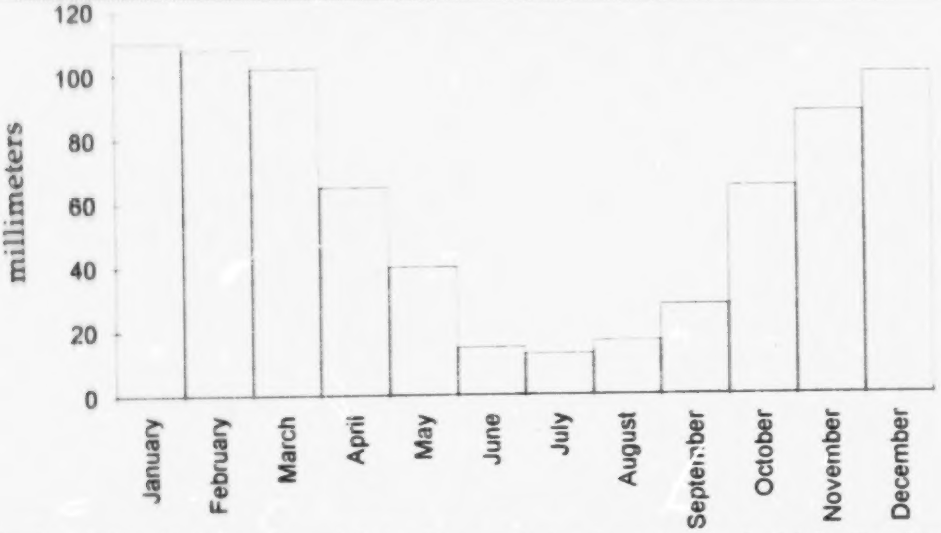
   (b) How many millimeters of rain fall during these three winter months in Lesotho?

5. Basotho are happy for the extra rainfall in summer. This helps the crops grow.

   (a) December is the first summer month in Lesotho. Which are the other two?

   (b) How many millimeters of rain fall during these three summer months in Lesotho?

Annual Rainfall for Mohale's Hoek, Lesotho



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Touring Lesotho

Directions: This story lets you tour Lesotho without even leaving your desk. Read each section and decide which kind of transportation is best for that part of your trip. You will need to look at the map and think about the land in order to make wise choices. Be ready to explain your decisions. Your choices of travel are:

horse **airplane** **bus** **foot**

1. On your first day in Lesotho, you leave the capital of **Maseru** (B-1) and visit the famous mountain plateau called **Thaba Bosiu** (B-2). Almost 200 years ago, the first Basotho king defended his people from enemies here, and built a nation.

form of travel: Maseru to Thaba Bosiu:____________

2. At **Thaba-Bosiu**, you learn about the fossilized dinosaur footprints near the town of **Leribe** (A-2). Off you go, amazed at the great age of these wide, flat plains.

form of travel: Thaba-Bosiu to Leribe:____________

3. In **Leribe** you meet a Mosotho nun who is going back to the Catholic Mission at **Mamohau** (B-3). She invites you to visit this isolated mountain region.

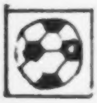
forms of travel: Leribe to Mamohau:__________+__________

4. You're in luck! The soccer team at Mamohau High School is playing a game at **Seshote** (B-3). The whole school is traveling there, and they want you to come too.

form of travel: Mamohau to Seshote:____________

5. At **Seshote**, you meet an old man who used to dig for diamonds at Lesotho's only mine. He offers to take you there. Together you head to **Letseng-la-Terae** (A-3).

form of travel: Seshote to Letseng-la-Terae:________



6. Bad news: you didn't find any diamonds. Good news: you find transportation out of **Letseng-la-Terae**. Bad news: on your way back to **Maseru** you hit a freak snowstorm and get stranded in your travels. Good news: You're stranded at **Oxbow** (A-3), site of the only ski slope in southern Africa.

form of travel: Letseng-la-Terae to Oxbow to Maseru: ___________

7. Back in Maseru, you grow restless. Where are the wild animals? There aren't many left in Lesotho, but you know you can catch sight of the deer-like rhebok at **Sehlabathebe National Park** (C-4). Too bad it is too windy to fly today.

form of travel: Maseru to Sehlabathebe:___________

8. Your Lesotho adventure is almost over, so back you go to Maseru. You'll never forget the sight of water tumbling over one of the tallest falls in Africa, located near **Semonkong** (C-2).

form of travel: Sehlabathebe to Maseru:___________

Looking at Lesotho

Directions: Use the map of Lesotho (p. 75) to help you answer the questions below.

1. How many kilometers is Lesotho from east to west? How many miles would this be? (1 km. = .6 mi.)

2. How many kilometers is Lesotho from north to south? How many miles would this be? (1 km. = .6 mi.)

3. Why do you think Lesotho is sometimes called "The Kingdom in the Sky" and "The Roof of Africa?"

4. About two-thirds of Lesotho is over 2,400 meters in elevation. How many feet above sea level would this be? (1 m. = 3.3 ft.)

5. The Lesotho lowlands only receive about 28 inches of rain each year. Even though the mountainous areas receive better rainfall, most crops are grown in the lowlands. What might be the reason(s) for this?

6. Most people in Lesotho live in the lowland areas. How can you tell this from the map?

7. List several reasons which might explain why fewer people live in the mountains than in the lowlands.

8. Make some predictions: how do you think life in the mountains of Lesotho might be different than life in the lowlands? (*Hint:* think about weather, diet, and kinds of work people do.)

Saturday Afternoon Tea

Here is an excerpt from a true story written by a former Volunteer in Lesotho. The story tells about a visit between the Volunteer and her Basotho neighbors in an isolated mountain village. This part of the story tells about entering the home of her friends. Read this passage with the aim of trying to find out as much as you can about their house, which is called a *rondavel*.

. . . Ever since her husband, *Ntate* Molati, put a new thatch roof on my house, *'M'e* Malineo, my neighbor, seems happier. The school paid him fifty *maloti*, or twenty-five dollars, for the three-day job and maybe that's why she's pleased. For whatever reason, *'M'e* Malineo smiles. She has a donkey, some chickens, one field, and four kids. Today she has invited me for tea.

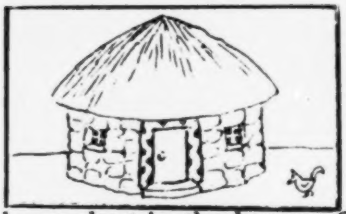
I cross the swept earth yard of her compound and enter *'M'e* Malineo's main *rondavel*. It is empty. I step back outside and see smoke drifting out the open door of the smaller *rondavel* where she does her cooking. As I approach, I hear muffled voices from inside. I duck my head and enter. The windowless hut is dark and bare. By the light of the fire, I can just make out a circle of people gathered around on the earth floor. *Ntate* Molati sits on a stool close to the center hearth, feeding the fire with branches and brush. It's a young fire, leaping quickly. I take the bench by the wall next to him and set my legs straight out, Basotho-style.

Malineo sits on the ground, frying dough cakes at the edge of the fire. She places four of the crisp golden *makoenya* on a green tin plate. They are the size of hot crossed buns. She hands me the plate, and I accept it, holding out both hands in the Basotho way of showing gratitude and respect.

Malineo and her friends gossip on in Sesotho and I listen to the sounds, watching their faces light up by the flame. Everyone and everything in this small hut is the color of earth. Curving behind Malineo, the wall itself is made of dirt and dung. She and *Ntate* Molati built this rondavel last year. They have yet to smooth the walls and the mud wattle remains roughly smeared. From small shadows rippling across the walls, I can see where Malineo placed her palms and fingers, pressing the mud to stone. In the flickering light, the imprints look feathery, like a corona of handprints fanning the room.

Against the dull brown of the walls, Malineo's face is radiant. Her forehead is smooth and her eyes, wide spaced, pick up the sparks of the fire. She's smiling and laughing, her cheeks shiny copper by the light of the glow. Even though she has a hard life, I can still see in her grown face the look of a mischievous child. . .

At Home in Lesotho

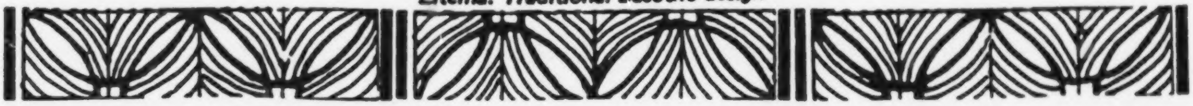


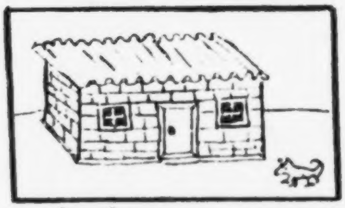
The ***rondavel*** is the traditional house of Lesotho. It is a circular building with a thatched roof. Walls of a *rondavel* are often made from locally cut stone. The walls are often more than a foot thick and are coated on the inside with a mud plaster. The plaster is actually a mix of special soils and cow dung which forms a protective surface on the floor as well: rarely is there loose dust in the home. Cleanliness and tidiness are very important to the Basotho. In addition to sweeping daily, the women re-smear the interior of their homes every few months. Some women even sculpt built-in shelves from the mud-dung plaster; others make designs on the inside or outside walls of their homes.

The *rondavel's* thatched roof is made from bushels of local reeds which are lashed onto a stick frame with a straw rope and a giant (six foot) wooden "needle." The thick roofs are porous enough to let out smoke from the central hearth fire but tight enough to keep out rain and cold. The thickness of both walls and roof make the *rondavel* a well-insulated home.

Many Basotho familes own several *rondavels* together in a packed earth compound (yard). The *rondavels* may be of different sizes and qualities depending on their use: one may be for cooking, one for sleeping, one for storage, and so on. In general, the *rondavel* compounds are grouped together in villages. Few rural Basotho live independently of a local community.

Litema: Traditional Basotho design





The **one-story western-style home** is also common in Lesotho. Usually it is built from cinderblock or brick which is laid along a rectangualar foundation. Unlike the *rondavel*, this kind of home sometimes has more than one room inside. The interior walls may be painted, and often a slab of concrete forms the floor. It usually has a few windows, which the traditional *rondavel* may or may not have. Most of these houses have a flat, corrugated tin roof. For most people, the corrugated tin is also the ceiling of the home. These houses lack other forms of insulation.

Many people consider the western-style house to be a status symbol. Wealthy urban Basotho often have large homes which resemble those found in the United States (though they are never made of wood). Many of these urban homes will have electricity, running water, and, for the wealthy, indoor plumbing. Basotho with sufficient income will also equip their homes with western-style furniture: beds, sofas, stereos, *etc*. (Historically, the Basotho lived simply and did not use much wooden furniture. Can you think of reasons why?)

Making Connections Between Geography and Architecture

This worksheet asks you to think about how geography can affect house design. In Lesotho, why is the *rondavel* more common in the mountains? Why is the the western-style home more common in the lowlands?

1. Below are some regional characteristics of Lesotho. Write **U** beside those that best describe urban lowlands areas. Write **R** beside those that best describe rural mountain areas.

___limited or no access to roads
___rocky terrain
___hot summer days, cool winter nights
___lots of grazing lands for cattle
___many people are wage earners
___many people are subsistence farmers who have little cash income
___very cold nights in winter; mild in summer
___paved roads
___access to electricity and running water
___densely populated
___easy access to shops and businesses
___sparsely populated

2. Consider this information in relation to what you know about Lesotho house construction from p. 47. Now brainstorm answers to the following questions:

(a) Why would cinderblock be an unsuitable building material in the mountains?

(b) Why would it be difficult to maintain a *rondavel* in a city?

(c) What does having money have to do with the kind of home one builds?

(d) What disadvantages are there to having a tin roof instead of a thatch roof? What advantages?

3. Now it is time to describe how the *rondavel* and the western-style home each reflects the environment in which it is found. Answer on a separate piece of paper.

(a) Explain how the architecture of a *rondavel* (its size, shape, and construction materials) is related to the geography of the rural mountains (terrain, climate, economy).

(b) Explain how the architecture of a modest, western-style home (its size, shape, and construction materials) is related to the geography of the urban lowlands (terrain, climate, economy).

Cattle Culture

Directions: Below are descriptions of some of the ways rural Basotho use their cows. Match each *use* with the *need* it meets (letters *a-h*). Letters may be used more than once.

______1. In many parts of Lesotho, schoolboys use teams of cattle to plow their school fields in the spring.

______2. Although the Basotho wear clothes similar to those in the United States, the hide from a cow is sometimes made into a cape or blanket for a special purpose.

______3. In a country where firewood is scarce, dried cow dung burns well for daily cooking fires. After all, it *is* dried grass!

______4. Many families milk their cows when the cattle graze closer to the village in winter.

______5. Traditionally, parents of a young man give 20 head of cattle to the parents of the young woman he plans to marry. This exchange is meant to show honor toward the woman and to her family. Since it usually takes many years to accomplish, the custom of *bohali* is also intended to create economic links between the two families. The Basotho believe a good marriage between two individuals must involve a strong, healthy union between their families as well.

______6. At harvest time, teams of cows can be hitched to turn a make-shift grinding mill.

______7. Mixed with special soils and water, cow dung forms an odorless plaster which is smeared on the floors and walls of the traditional *rondavels*. When dry, this plaster keeps the home dust free for several months.

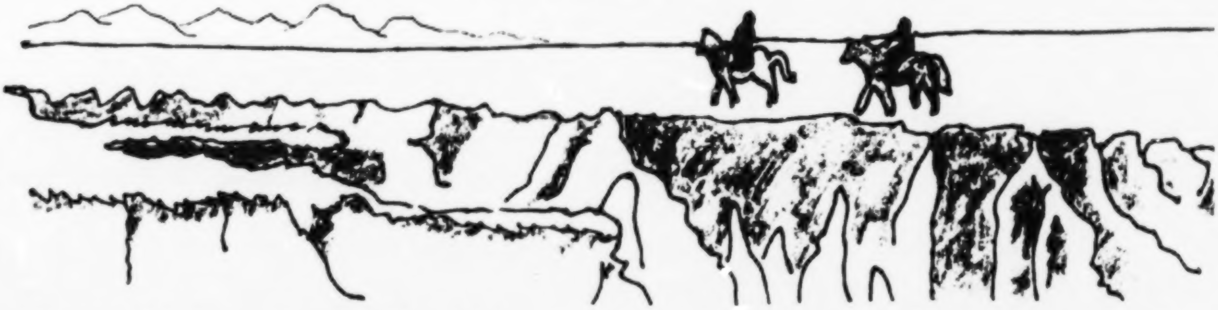
______8. Respecting the life and death of each person is very important to the Basotho. When someone dies in the village, a cow is always slaughtered in his or her honor. The family then prepares a feast for everyone who attended the burial, usually the whole village.

______9. A man may not have much money, but if he has many cows, he is thought of as wealthy indeed.

Type of physical or cultural need being met by using the cow:

a. marriage b. death rites c. status d. fuel
e. shelter f. clothing g. agriculture h. food

Crisis in Lesotho: Soil Erosion



Background Information: Erosion is the wearing away of the earth's surface, which happens all the time, but at different rates in different places. Soil erosion becomes a serious problem when it removes topsoil from an area faster than it can be replaced. Topsoil is not just any kind of dirt; it is the nutrient-rich layer of earth from which all things grow. Without topsoil, the bare earth cannot support life.

Soil erosion has both natural and human causes. Wind blows away soil if it is dry or loose. Water can wash it away. Humans contribute to soil erosion by overusing the land in a variety of ways. They may burn brush and grass, thus leaving the ground unprotected from the drying effects of sun and wind. Soil can easily erode without sufficient roots to hold it. Humans may also overstock an area with their animals until the grasses become worn from overgrazing. In addition, footpaths and animal paths can further abrade the land.

With grass worn away, water can easily wash away the bare soil. In Lesotho, the force of gathered water rushing down sloping lands leads to the formation of deep gullies (called *dongas*) that can tear through unprotected land for many kilometers.

Directions: Below are five situations related to Lesotho's soil erosion problem. Explain how each situation contributes to this environmental crisis. Base your answers on the information about soil erosion, supplied above. Answer on a separate piece of paper.

1. Steep, treeless mountains cover two-thirds of Lesotho's land. The mountains drop off sharply onto flat lowland plains.
2. Because Lesotho's terrain is so rugged, only 13% of the land in the entire country can be plowed and cultivated. This means every year rural Basotho use every piece of this land to grow the wheat, maize, and sorghum they need.
3. The driest months in Lesotho occur in winter, after the crops in the fields have been harvested. This is also the windiest time.
4. Lesotho has a sunny, dry climate for most of the year. During the summer, however, cloudbursts from thunderstorms drench the country with rain.
5. Too many cattle, sheep, and goats have made Lesotho's land up to 300% overgrazed.

Alikes and Differences: Schooling in Lesotho

Directions: Read the information below, then complete the following sorting activity with a partner. You will need to cut the items from the paper.

Two girls, Neo (NAY-oh, "gift") and Lerato (lay-RAH-toe, "love") both attend Form A (grade 8) in secondary school. Neo lives in the mountains of Lesotho; Lerato lives in the capital city of Maseru. Although the two girls study the same subjects, their schooling experiences are very different because of where they live.

Think about what these factors might be as you sort the items listed below into THREE categories:

1. Activities which most likely describe Neo's *rural* school experience.
2. Activities which most likely describe Lerato's *urban* school experience.
3. Activities which both girls would share in common.

- rises at 5:00 a.m. to go hike and gather firewood for the school's kitchen
- discusses Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in English class
- presses her school uniform with an electric iron
- washes her school uniform in a stream running by the girls' dormitory
- goes to see an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie at the cinema
- does homework by a kerosene lamp
- rides a public bus to school
- hikes nine hours to celebrate Christmas holidays at home with her family
- attends an after school Girl Scout meeting
- worries about her geography test
- does homework by electric light
- talks on the telephone to a friend
- plays netball after school (similar to basketball)
- attends school prayers each morning before class
- takes a math test
- weeds the school gardens as part of the school's manual work responsibilities
- cleans the school's toilet facilities as part of the school's manual work responsibilities
- complains to her friends that most of the boys in her class are several years older than she is
- orders French fries and fried chicken with her family at a well-known fast-food franchise
- sings Sesotho songs with her friends at recess

The Snow Mama

Here is an excerpt from a story written by a former Volunteer. This true account tells about a winter journey through the Lesotho highlands, where she lived.

It snowed on the last day of my Lesotho school holiday. It was July and it snowed everywhere, throughout the bare Maluti mountains and across the lowland plains. I was visiting a Peace Corps friend in the western lowlands and it snowed there, too. Tan from our recent expeditions to the equatorial game parks of Kenya and the vast Okovanga Swamp Delta of Botswana, we layered socks and sweatshirts, went out and rolled snow across a hitherto dry and dusty land. We threw snowballs. We fanned angels. We rolled African snow-women bigger than life, pressed stones for their eyes, clumped snow for their hats. We posed with them, snapped pictures. The next day I boarded a plane back to the mountains.

Most of the snow had melted by then, but not across the Maluti. As the 20-seater lifted, half-empty, from the lowland runway, I could see the 10,000 foot range cresting the distant horizon white as surf. Unlike me, the Basotho on board had come prepared: ski hats, rubber boots, thick wool robes. In the close confines of the unlit cabin, everyone stared straight ahead, unmoving, while the plane droned on and the light-filled landscape beneath us flickered across the portal windows like a silent unwatched film.

But I watched. I peered out. Down there, beyond the treeless towns of tin-roofed houses and backyard plots, bright bush taxis hurtled down the macadam, crammed full, and blaring jive. Past the highway spread the Lesotho plains, an endless flood of land broken here and there by the snaggle-toothed buttes and flat-topped ridges of geological eras long past. We flew low, skimming the rock outcrops, the stubble fields, tracked for miles the erosion *dongas* which dug through the plains like a delta, furrowing the tan earth brick red and raw. We floated over villages: small cluster of thatched *rondavels,* tidy as acorns, their compounds and cattle *kraals* ringed by stones.

For fifteen minutes it kept playing out beneath me like this: the swept earth compounds, the lone *rondavels,* cattle outposts, shadowy flocks of sheep and goats, granite ledges, big boulders, patches of snow. Then, zoom--pure blank. Blank like a snapped movie reel. Blank white. Blank above, blank below: no biege earth, no blue sky, just snowfields on and on without end. We'd done it: hurtled up and over the Maluti escarpment into the remote highlands of Lesotho. Once thousands of feet in the air, our small prop plane now just skimmed the heavy swells of snow beneath us, just dodged the thick press of clouds above. From the tip of our wings to the rim of the crumpled horizon, pure white surrounded us, defied us, infused our dim cabin with an icy, watery, kind of light.

There was no sign of life below: nothing but vast and treeless ranges as silent and rugged as the Himalaya. We flew on, alone and fragile winged, straight on. Finally, the Mosotho pilot, navigating by sight alone, fixed upon the Malibamatso River which uncoiled from the mountains that day black as a snake. He sank the plane low, slipped its wings between ridges and canyons and tracked the river upstream. Approaching the desolate mountain plateau of Pelaneng, we veered across one last cliff face. Then the plane rolled hard, fast, across an unmarked airstrip, its wheels spinning through the snow as if through froth.

Leaving the engines racing, the pilot set the handbrake and swung out of the cockpit. Gingerly he stepped through the snow in his polished shoes and gold-trimmed navy suit, and yanked open the baggage hull. Then he pulled down the passenger steps. Inside the cabin, no one budged. Pelaneng was but the first of several mountain stops. I rose, nodded to the Basotho burrowed in their blankets, and hopped out. Hopped out and instantly got slammed by the cold. Stunned, I dragged my backpack from the plane's hull and started rummaging around for extra clothes.

Shaking snow from his cuffs, the Mosotho pilot pulled himself back into his seat, got ready to go, then paused. He looked over at me, pale white girl in knee socks and sneakers, sweater and pinstriped skirt, struggling mightily with a rain poncho pink as as rubbery shrimp. "Shall I take you back?" he yelled over the whirl of the propellers, in the British English he had used abroad. Of course he meant down to the lowlands right then, but feeling like an arctic explorer dropped at Earth's end who'd just arranged pick-up at spot X six months, two years, a decade hence, I took a step away from the plane. I heaved the frame pack onto my back, buckled it, fingers already cumbersome and raw, and waved.

The airplane taxied down the airstrip, turned delicately as a mosquito on skates, then raced full throttle across the snowy plateau and off the cliff. I watched it pull up from the snow fields below, white against white, and head toward more distant ranges. Then all I could hear were the faint echoes of its engines which trailed through the winter valleys like the last deep notes of a worn cello.

Heavy winter clouds still hung low overhead. I started plodding across the field, toward the downhill paths and donkey trails that led "home" to the village of Mamohau, three hours' walk away. Carefully I picked my way down familiar paths, now slick with mud and snow. Brushing past the wild roses now tangled with ice, I kept on angling down, switchback after switchback, down to the river bottom where the Malibamatso River channelled through the mountains in sloping canyon walls.

The track beside the river stretched empty before me: no men on mules, no women hustling to the mill, no goats or cows, no herdboys screeching echoes through the canyon with their handmade bows and oil can zithers. I veered away from the river, started to climb again. It was a long diagonal climb without switchbacks, heavy and slow, rising in desolation to a second plateau, and eventually, the village of Ha Lejone. Hiking up that ridge, I could usually hear Ha Lejone before I could see it. I would hear dogs barking, and roosters crowing. I would hear the put-put-put of diesel motors grinding maize and the loopy whoops and hollers of kids. But this afternoon, a hundred round huts sank into the snowy field silent as stones. Nothing moved but the whorls of blue smoke that filtered through every thatched roof in the village. The whole camp smelled like sage.

Ha Lejone was my halfway point. I headed toward the trading post, where I'd always stop to ease my load, buy a cola and a package of ginger snaps, and most importantly, ask for mail.

'M'e Ernestinah was the village postmistress and trader, a refined, slow-moving grandmother of ample proportions who sorted the region's mail through cat's eye glasses and dusted her shop immaculate. She was fluent in English, I think, but always spoke Sesotho with me.

"*Ko-ko*," I called out to her in the Basotho equivalent of knock-knock. Stamping snow from my sneakers, I crossed the threshold. The post office, a single stone room, was as damp and dark inside as a root cellar in winter. In the gloom, Ernestinah was standing behind the shop's wooden counter, a black and turquoise blanket pinned tightly across her dress. She had a portable heater rigged up and instantly the kerosene fumes clawed my throat and stung my eyes like onions. I got my cola first thing.

Ernestinah and I huddled close, kindling conversation. No one had ventured to the store that day and I could tell she was lonely. Peeling the wrapper off a couple of ginger snaps, I tried to describe the gameparks of Kenya -- the broad plains of grasses where zebras criss crossed in herds and giraffes gamboled and wild elephants swung their trunks with joy. But outside there was still only snow and ice: a lifeless, frozen world. Wordlessly, Ernestinah handed over a stack of village mail. I started riffling through, searching for letters from home.

Suddenly, a soft and gentle voice rose up behind us, "*Ko-ko*." Silhouetted against the snow in the open doorway stood a young woman wrapped in blankets, her form statuesque from the high heels on her feet to the hand luggage balanced on her head. With a fluid gesture, the woman eased off the luggage and stepped into the room. Then she started shedding blankets, layer after layer, like a butterfly from a cocoon. Finally, the woman laid a bundle of small blankets from her back onto the shop's counter. She began to unwrap them carefully, as one might pull back cloths around a loaf of fresh baked bread. There, snug in the center, lay a tiny baby boy, fingers curled tight, eyelids closed. Six days old. We all just stared.

The woman started speaking, said she was taking him home from the mission hospital at Mamohau, where I was going, to a village near Pelaneng, where I had come. What did Ernestinah have for babies? she wanted to know, eyes bright and voice slightly breathless from her icy hike through snow. What clothings could she buy?

Ernestinah started rummaging about. She ambled over to the shelves which rose floor to ceiling and retrieved, somewhere behind the cartons of rice and boxes of soap, a tiny pair of white booties and a small baby blanket. Together she and the new mother ran their hands over the soft nappy cotton, traced the small elephant print with the tips of their fingers, murmured quick Sesotho.

The woman pulled out her purse. Then she took the white booties and eased them over the baby's tiny curled feet. He was still asleep. She took his loose body and swaddled it in the soft folds of the elephant blanket. She took her other blanket scraps and wrapped him some more. Leaning over, she balanced him on her back once again, then one by one gathered up her own heavy blankets, and brought them around her like wings. Tucking in the corners of the last one, she slowly raised herself tall, and smiled. And with that, with the same easy grace in which she had entered, the new mother stepped out into the snow in her red high heels, tipped her hospital bag back on her head, and strode forth into a raw and frozen land, the clouds hanging low, the snow turning to ice, newborn sleeping snug and nestled on a warm and swinging back.

Taming Highland Waters

by David Kinley

The article from which this excerpt is taken first appeared in World Development, *September 1992. It has been adapted and reprinted with permission.*

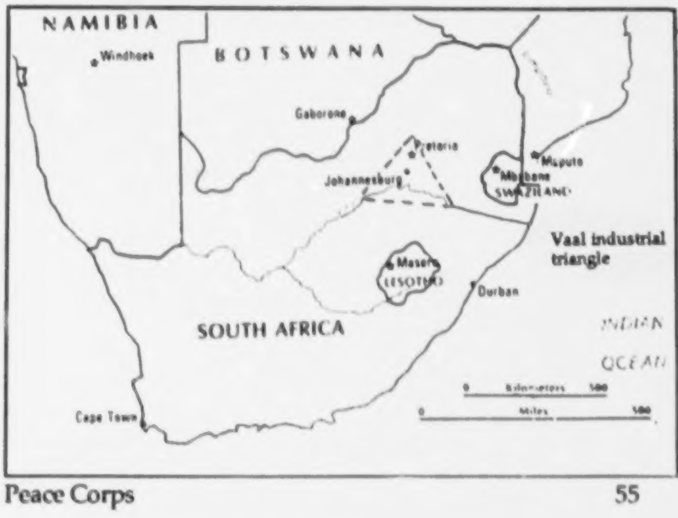
Bokong Ha-Kennan, Lesotho--Just a few years ago, this scattered settlement in Lesotho's rugged northern highlands was barely accessible by Land Rover. Today, giant Caterpillar earthmovers are carving up steep hillsides to make way for modern highways. New roadside shops and trading posts are springing up to supply thousands of workers housed in sprawling trailer camps. And high atop a rim overlooking a deep gorge cut by the Malibamatso River, a suburban-style development is rising, replete with ranch homes, sidewalks, streetlights and a comfortable visitors' lodge.

The flurry of construction is all part of Africa's largest water diversion scheme, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP). Begun in 1986, the LHWP involves building five major dams, hundreds of kilometres of highways and tunnels and an underground hydro-power plant over a 30-year period. The first phase alone, comprising the 182-metre-high Katse Dam and a 48-kilometre transfer tunnel, will begin delivering over 1.5 million cubic metres of water per day to South Africa in 1996. Even now, long before the US$20 billion project is completed, it is irrevocably altering Lesotho's economy, culture, and economy.

Tapping water for hydropower is designed to make Lesotho self-sufficient in energy. It will also earn the landlocked country of 1.6 million people up to $80 million a year in royalites on the water piped to South Africa. At a time when earnings from miners working in South Africa are stagnating due to automation, the project offers the potential to spur new employment-creating industries and make the country more attractive to foreign investors and tourists.

But critics, from local church groups to global environmentalists, claim that current links with South Africa, including Lesotho's heavy dependence on Johannesburg for foreign exchange, would be dangerously deepened. They claim, moreover, that like many large-scale dam projects in the developing world, the LHWP will impose sizeable social, economic and environmental costs on those who can least afford them, particularly Lesotho's poor herders and farmers. Endangered species of plants and animals may be threatened, they fear. . . .

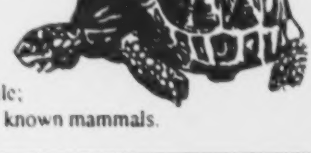
Photo reproduced with permission from the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority. Map adapted from one of southern Africa, United States Government Printing Office, PrEX 3.10/4 : So 8a/12. "Lesotho Highlands Water Project Treasures" reprinted from the March 1992 newlsetter of the U.S. organization, Friends of Lesotho.



Lesotho Highlands Water Project Treasures

Some interesting items have been unearthed during excavation for the Highlands Water Project.

- A 3" fossil thought to represent an advanced shrew-like evolutionary phase between reptiles and mammals, belonging to the cynodontia family;
- Dinosaur egg;
- The earliest known tortoise;
- Small, early crocodile;
- Some of the earliest known mammals.



Background Questions: The Lesotho Highlands Water Project

Directions: Answer the questions below. You will need to refer to the article, "Taming Highland Waters," p. 55 as well as to the topographical map of Lesotho, p. 75.

1. Which THREE of the following facts best support the claim that there is a great demand for water in the Vaal region of South Africa? Circle your choices.
   a. Like Lesotho, this region of South Africa experiences an annual dry season of several months.
   b. With a population over 1,500,000, Johannesburg is reputed to be the largest city in the world not located by a significant body of water.
   c. Pretoria is the center of government in South Africa while Johannesburg is the center of commerce.
   d. The Vaal region is site of extensive industry and mining operations.

2. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) is a joint venture between Lesotho and South Africa.
   a. List three ways Lesotho will benefit from this project, according to supporters.

   b. List three drawbacks of the project, according to critics.

3. The steep canyon walls through which the highland rivers flow are well suited for building very tall dams. In addition to being one of the largest water retention projects in Africa, the LHWP will also be able to dam water to depths greater than the English Channel. If one meter equals 1.09 yards, about how many football fields high will the Katse Dam be when completed?

4. Water from Lesotho will be directed to the Vaal region in South Africa via an advanced tunnel system.
   a. Approximately how many miles is the Vaal region from Lesotho?

   b. As the water will flow by gravity to the Vaal region, what does this suggest to you about the elevation difference between Lesotho and South Africa?

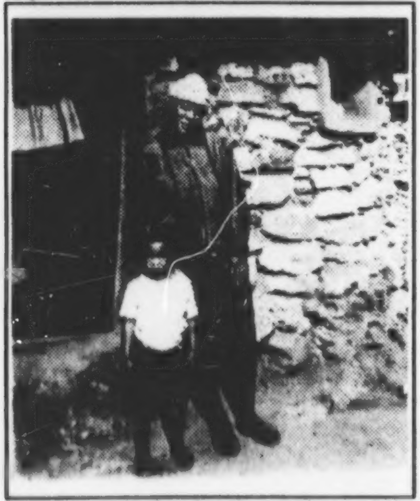
   c. Locate the Malibamatso River on the topographical map of Lesotho. Situated in the north central area of the country, it is one of the rivers scheduled to be dammed. Presently, this river flows south. In what direction will its water be diverted once the tunnels are completed?

5. Locate the Lesotho village of Bokong at the base of the Malibamatso River Valley. The Katse Dam will be built just east of this village. What might be some of the reasons this site in particular *and* the highlands region in general were chosen for the LHWP instead of a lowlands location? Consider the physical characteristics of Lesotho as well as its population patterns.

From the Bottom of the Dam...

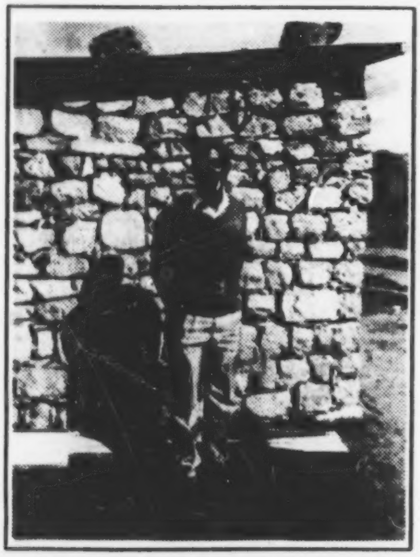
We have more Worries Now

'M'e Mamotheba Rakuoane, the wife of a migrant worker and a resident of Bokong, is very happy. She expects that her husband, who now returns home only once a year, will be able to come home frequently after the Highlands Water Project road construction is completed. She also has hopes that other services will improve. "I won't have to travel to Thaba-Tseka in order to deliver my babies. I know the government is going to build either a clinic or hospital for white people who will be working here," she said. But she is also a little bitter. Only now that this huge project has begun is the government willing to improve services, she says. They don't do it just because the local people need the services.



Ntate 'Nyane Motsomotso, a school teacher at Bokong, is very worried by the increased traffic in their peaceful mountains. He thinks the wildlife of this country is endangered. "We are already losing the wild animals that we used to have," he says

Motsomotso asked, "What about the worldwide threat, AIDS?" He thinks of Highlands Water Project as an AIDS carrier itself, because people will be coming from all over and bringing AIDS into Lesotho.



Ntate 'Nyane Motsomotso has another worry. He sees that the South African mines no longer recruit many Basotho, but he had expected the Highland Water Project to employ many local workers. "Now the Boers are bringing in their own people. Where are our people going to work?" He claims that the locally recruited workers can't join trade unions, and are fired any time the employer feels like it.

The Fields have been taken

'M'e 'Malikabiso Mofolo and Ntate Thabeng Khetsi of Thaba Tseka have been directly affected by the project. Their fields have been taken for construction of residential houses for project officials. 'M'e 'Malikabiso cried out, that the government had promised to compensate them for the fields, but in September she was given only 16 bags of maize. She is not sure whether the 16 bags are compensation for this year's crop or whether she will be given more maize in future. "We are neither told anything nor given any documents that promise us something. We are stuck," she said angrily.

Ntate Khetsi says he is very unfortunate, because this is the second field that he has lost for "development." The first one was taken in 1975 when the Thaba-Tseka Development Programme was established. Ntate Khetsi is bitter: "I have given up, because I know from my previous experience that the government won't help us. I won't be surprised if I don't get anything more than these 10 bags I have recently received. Maybe things might be different this time, but I doubt it, especially because we are not told anything, as usual."

Excerpts on this page are adapted from the article, "From the Bottom of the Dam," of the Lesotho newsletter, Work For Justice, *No. 24 (March 1990). Reprint with acknowledgment.*

The Road to Katse Dam

Preparations for building the first Highland Water Project dam are well underway in the Thaba Tseka District of Lesotho. Initial improvements on the road between Thaba Tseka and Bokong, called the Southern Access Road, were completed earlier this year. Construction crews are currently building bridges, putting in culverts, and widening or re-routing the old road. The changes to this road have dismayed some local residents, who see little reason for the damage done to their land.

"They have bull-dozed my peach trees!" cried one elderly resident of a village, who has seen the road re-routed to within a few steps from her door. She complains that the construction vehicles are noisy, go far too fast, and pay too little attention to people or livestock. She has already lost two chickens. Other villagers have similar complaints.

Thriving Alcohol and Tobacco Business

Despite such feelings, the local people are generally eager to find employment within the Project. Those who have found work are most often employed at the lowest levels, as labourers or domestic servants. Yet even these low-paying jobs have provided a temporary boost to the area's economy. People who live near the construction camps are doing a thriving business in alcohol and tobacco sales. Several new cafes have opened as well.

LESOTHO HIGHLANDS

Water Project

BENEFITS

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project will greatly benefit the Kingdom of Lesotho. Royalty income will provide a massive and continuous injection of capital for Lesotho. The hydroelectric power scheme will make Lesotho, in spite of the fact that it lacks coal for power generation, almost self-sufficient in electric power and will save many millions of Maloti on energy imports every year.

The construction phase has created significant job opportunities and many more will be created as an indirect spin-off from the expected growth in tourism, fishing and irrigated agriculture.

The development of infrastructure has made a real contribution to regional development and the creation of markets for local produce.

At the same time, the Project will double the water resources available to the economic and industrial heartland of the RSA which will sustain the continued growth and development of Lesotho's neighbour.

The text and graphics on this page are adapted from information prepared and published by The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, Maseru, Lesotho.

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Hair-pin-bend Situated at an altitude of above 3 000 metres above sea level

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

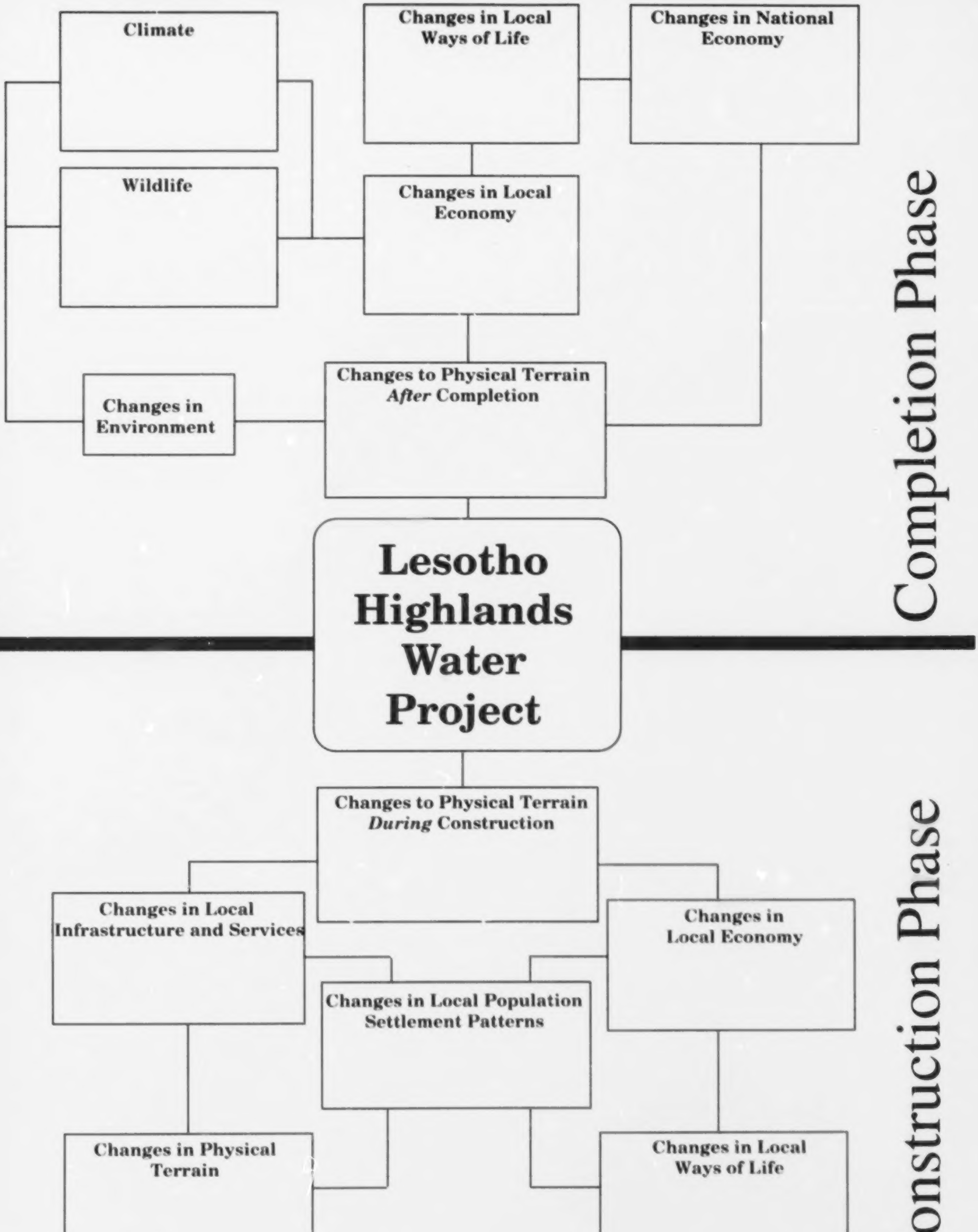
The Lesotho Highlands Water Project is a large project by any standard and is to be implemented in very rugged and remote terrain. These two conditions combine to make the implementation of the Project to a large extent dependent on the level of infrastructure available prior to the start of the Project. Construction related to the upgrading of roads, bridges and border facilities both in Lesotho and the RSA, as well as the establishment of advanced camp facilities therefore, commenced in 1988 to pave the way for the main construction activities.

The infrastructure development for Phase IA comprises:

- Upgrading of existing roads both in Lesotho and the RSA in accordance with LHWP traffic volumes.
- Erection of construction power transmission lines and substations.
- Provision of other services such as telecommunications, water and sewerage for construction work.

Environmental and Social Impacts of Phase 1A

Description	Katse
Demography	
Villages	121
Households	3357
People	18111
Households losing all fields	365
Households losing some fields	735
Households with no fields	441
Arable land (ha)	656
Grazing land (ha)	3110
Garden land (ha)	1
Trees	900
Villages relocated	1
Houses flooded	58
Woolshed	1
Bridge	1
Cafe & store	2


Climate
Changes in Local Ways of Life
Changes in National Economy
Wildlife
Changes in Local Economy
Changes in Environment
Changes to Physical Terrain *After* Completion
Completion Phase
Lesotho Highlands Water Project
Construction Phase
Changes to Physical Terrain *During* Construction
Changes in Local Infrastructure and Services
Changes in Local Economy
Changes in Local Population Settlement Patterns
Changes in Physical Terrain
Changes in Local Ways of Life

Men Flow Like Rivers

Men flow like rivers from the mountains
clear and strong
into the pits of South Africa
to pull gold from the earth.
As they descend into dark chambers
their families become memories, like the sun.
They claw through the flesh of mother earth
searching for veins to exploit,
while their own blood and souls are ravaged.
For when their bodies are spent,
twisted or lifeless,
the clean white-shirted man picks up his phone
and orders another river of men
from the mountains.

According to Work for Justice, the Lesotho-based newsletter in which this poem first appeared, "Men Flow Like Rivers" was written by Basotho participants in a training workshop for community workers.

From Work for Justice. No. 24 (March 1990). Reprint with acknowledgment.

Digging Deeper: Questions to Think About

Directions: Read carefully the poem "Men Flow Like Rivers." Then answer the questions below.

1. This poem addresses issues related to migrant labor in Lesotho. Human labor is, in fact, Lesotho's greatest export: over 200,000 people--more than a third of the total male workforce--is out of the country at any one time. How does the first line of this poem refer to both the size and source of this economic movement?

2. Migrant workers flock to industrial South Africa from countries throughout southern Africa. Lesotho especially has a reputation for a skilled and educated labor force. Most of these workers will be wage employees of the industry described in this poem. What is that industry?

3. Migrant workers live in male-only work "hostels" at the mines. The terms of their contracts and the distance of the mines from Lesotho keep the men away from home for many months at a time. What line in the poem refers to this reality?

4. What attitude toward the *physical mining* of the earth is expressed in this poem? Support your answer with reference to specific phrases.

5. What attitude toward the *occupation* of miner is expressed in the poem? Support your answer with reference to specific phrases.

6. In your opinion, who is the "clean white-shirted man" referred to in this poem?

7. What lines of the poem suggest there is no shortage of Basotho men willing to work in South African mines? Considering the attitude of this poem to mining, what does this suggest about the economic opportunities inside Lesotho?

8. How would you describe the mood of this poem? In your opinion, would the tone of the poem have been different if the poets were writing about mining *within* Lesotho? Why or why not?

9. This poem was written as the Lesotho Highlands Water Project was underway. In your own opinion, what attitude do you think the authors of this poem might have toward this joint Lesotho-South African project? Why?

When Americans and Basotho Meet

What is it like to live in a culture different from one's own? Two former Volunteers offer their personal reflections. Keep in mind not all Volunteers of course, would have similar experiences or points of view. Note: in the Sesotho (say-SOO-too) language, one person from Lesotho is called a "Mosotho" (moh-SOO-too), but two or more people from Lesotho are called "Basotho" (bah-SOO-too).

Lesotho: An African American's Perspective by Consuella Brown

I left America with no expectations. So, when I first arrived in Lesotho, I was overwhelmed by the incredible sense of peace and belonging that I felt as I walked down the busy streets of Maseru. For the first time in my entire life, I was in the majority. Everyone around me had the same colored skin and textures of hair, and at times looked like someone in my family or neighborhood. . . .

Those first few weeks were definitely wonderful. The euphoria that comes with being in a place that one has always dreamed of being had not quite worn off, and I felt truly grateful to finally have my feet planted firmly on the soil of Mother Africa. . . . However, as the weeks became months and the romance and newness diminished, I began to realize that Lesotho was not always the paradise that I had blindly believed it to be when I first arrived.

Looking like a Mosotho definitely began to have its disadvantages. I was almost always spoken to in Sesotho, and when I explained that I did not understand what was being said to me, I was chastised and told to be quiet until I could speak Sesotho like a real Mosotho should speak it. At times I felt extremely frustrated and humiliated. . . as soon as I opened my mouth and began to speak English, doors seemed to close and walls seemed to go up. As a result, I often found myself feeling more alienated from the Basotho than closer to them.

Unfortunately, being expected to know Sesotho was not the only problem that I had to deal with because I looked like a Mosotho. On one day in particular, I can vividly remember leaving my house and heading for the Peace Corps office with one of the white male Volunteers. We were not touching, we were simply talking and walking; yet, on three different occasions during our walk, older Basotho men stopped us and started yelling at me in Sesotho. . . . What little I did understand led me to believe that they were not real pleased to see a "Mosotho" woman with a white man, who in this case they assumed to be South African. . . .

[*After additional comments, Consuella relates an incident that helped her see her cross-cultural experience in a different way.*]

. . . A fellow Volunteer asked me to come out to his site and speak to the students and teachers about the African American experience, and I agreed to do so with some ambivalence. I certainly did not feel like I was qualified to speak on behalf of all African Americans, but little did I know at the time that I accepted his invitation that this one event would in some ways help me to see Lesotho in a different light and ultimately serve to change my life. I remember sitting on the stage with the other Volunteer when one of the students piped up and said, "Sir, where is the guest speaker?" and he turned to me and said, "She is here." After a few oohs and ahs, another student raised his hand and said, "Sir, we all know that Black Americans have blue eyes and brown hair. This one here looks like a Mosotho, how can that be?"

. . . Upon regaining my composure, I tried to carefully think about how I was going to respond to this student. And while I had been asked this question countless times before, I realized then that instead of really answering the question, I had basically avoided it in hope that it would go away. My explanation, however, led into a very intense discussion about African American History, which to my dismay was news to most of those kids and teachers.

We talked for hours that day and when it was all said and done another student stood up and said, "We are one, please come home. We want you." Those words have stayed with me and have served to remind me that while I have in a way come home, having the same skin color and texture does not always [*imply*] oneness. I realized after that day with those students and teachers that I may be the only contact that the people of Lesotho will ever have with another African American and hence every contact is an important one no matter how painful it might be at times.

Questions to think about:

1. Why did Consuella feel so at peace the first few weeks?
2. As Consuella soon discovered, there were both advantages and disadvantages to looking like a Mosotho. What were some of the advantages? What were some of the disadvantages?
3. Why did Consuella begin to feel alienated from the Basotho?
4. "Sir, we all know that Black Americans have blue eyes and brown hair. . . "
    a. Why do you think the speaker was mistaken about the appearance of African Americans?
    b. How did this comment, which Consuella could have taken as an insult, actually help her understand, and therefore accept, her mixed reception by Basotho?
    c. Consuella admits times were still difficult after this turning point. A new purpose, however, helped her manage the discomfort of being an African American in Lesotho. What was it?

Lesotho: A White American's Perspective

by Elise Sprunt Sheffield

I really wanted to go to Africa. When I learned that Lesotho was in the middle of South Africa, however, I was worried. In South Africa, a white minority government continued to oppress the country's black majority in a racial segregation system of apartheid. Lesotho was an island of freedom, but surely Basotho who lived alongside such a system would hate me for the color of my skin--wouldn't I have felt that way if I were in their shoes? Well, I was wrong. I was welcomed. Maybe I should have taken a clue from the way Basotho greet everyone. "Khotso," they say, "peace to you!"

I hadn't been in Lesotho long when I realized the color of my skin was actually going to get me into opposite trouble. To Basotho in my rural region whose contact with whites had been quite limited, I was "Santa." After all, did I not look just like the benevolent Europeans they occasionally had met: the missionaries, the doctors, the wealthy foreign aid donors? Even though I lived simply like the people in my village, I was continually being asked for all sorts of things from neighbors and strangers alike. At first, I was glad to have people take an interest in me, but I tired of the game soon enough. The incessant requests made me feel used. I became defensive. I got angry. I got depressed.

For the first time in my life I became aware that I was being judged by the color of my skin and not for who I was as a person. For the first time I began to understand what it must be like to be the target of stereotyping. Even if the stereotype is fairly positive, it still feels like a kind of violence, for it robs you of being seen for who you are inside. Being stereotyped also gets in the way of having a true relationship with the person who is doing the stereotyping; it alienates you both.

It wasn't until the end of my stay that I began to see things differently. After two years living in that village, I began to understand. I saw, finally, that not only were the villagers misperceiving me, I was, in fact, misperceiving them. When the neighbors came to borrow things, they weren't just being pushy. No, they were also trying to draw me into a community web of give and take. They wanted me to be fully a part of village life, where the name of the game is not independence (as in the United States), but interdependence. "*Motho ke motho ka batho ba ba bang*" say the Basotho, "One is human only by, with, and through others." So much for being the rugged individualist.

When I realized the way my own "cultural lenses" were aggravating my cultural discomfort, I began to feel better. It would be nice to say that in the end that we all lived happily ever after, but that wouldn't be true. Beyond the color of my skin, I realized Americans and Basotho have some fundamental cultural differences about how to live and be. I could no more shake off my American outlook than I could shake off the color of my skin.

The Basotho and I continued to trip over our misperceptions of one another, but at least I knew what was going on. That helped put things into perspective. It meant a lot to know that the Basotho wanted me to be like them, even though it was not my way. Even though the Basotho found me pretty weird, they *still* accepted me without reservation. I was part of their life as fully as every young child, every widow, every handicapped person in that village. "*Khotso, ngoanesu*," they'd sing out when they'd see me, "Peace to you, child of our home." Finally, it is that Basotho lesson of inclusion, learned *despite* differences, that I carry like a dream for the United States, even to this day.

Questions to think about:

1. Why was Elise worried about going to Lesotho?
2. How was Elise perceived by rural Basotho? Why?
3. Why did Elise become angry and depressed?
4. "'One is human only by, with, and through others.'"
    a. What do you understand this Basotho saying to mean?
    b. How did Elise understand this cultural way of being to be different from the American way? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
    c. How did this perspective on Basotho culture help Elise understand her situation better?

Agree or Disagree?

Directions: Below are some statements about the experiences of Consuella and Elise. Mark whether you agree (A) or disagree (D). Several statements may be answered either way.

1. Most Basotho had erroneous ideas about African Americans because they never had met one.
2. Rural Basotho generalized about white people due to a limited number of contacts with them.
3. Consuella and Elise were both stereotyped.
4. Consuella and Elise both felt alienated from the Basotho because of the color of their skin.
5. Consuella and Elise both felt alienated from the Basotho because the Volunteers were Americans.
6. Talking things out with the Basotho helped Consuella gain a new perspective on her situation.
7. Living with the Basotho day in and day out helped Elise gain a new perspective on her situation.
8. Consuella has more in common with Elise than with the Basotho.
9. All African Americans will have a reception similar to Consuella's.
10. All whites will have a reception similar to Elise's.
11. Everybody wears cultural lenses.
12. Cultural misunderstandings are rare and easy to solve.

The Basotho: Stereotype Busters

Directions: Below are pairs of descriptions about people living in Lesotho today. While both statements are true, the first one easily leads us to develop stereotypes about what Basotho must be like. The second statement "busts" the stereotype. Explain how.

1. a. Moshoeshoe II served as the traditional king of the Basotho people until 1990.
   b. Moshoeshoe II has studied abroad, and earned a university degree from Oxford University in England.

2. a. *Ntate* Thabiso is an old, poor man living in a very isolated mountain village.
   b. When he was a young man, *Ntate* Thabiso took a ship to France with other Basotho and fought against the Nazis in World War II.

3. a. *'M'e* Mathabang carries her baby on her back like all Basotho mothers.
   b. *'M'e* Mathabang is a professor of agriculture at the University of Lesotho.

4. a. *Ntate* Mokete is a regional chief.
   b. *Ntate* Mokete wears a suit and tie to work.

5. a. *Ntate* Tankiso is very interested in spiritual matters.
   b. *Ntate* Tankiso is a Roman Catholic priest.

6. a. *'M'e* Malipuo eagerly attends school along with girls in her village.
   b. *'M'e* Malipuo is 35 and pregnant with her fifth child; she had not been able to complete her studies when she married at 16.

7. a. Selepe is a 15-year-old boy who lives in the isolated highlands. He has never seen an electric lightbulb or a telephone.
   b. Selepe wears a digital watch and listens to music tapes on his cassette player.

8. a. *Ntate* Mohapi cannot read or write as he has never been to school.
   b. *Ntate* Mohapi speaks four languages: Sesotho, Afrikaans, Xhosa, and Zulu because he works as a miner in South Africa.

9. a. *'M'e* Mapula is a nurse living in the capital city of Maseru.
   b. *'M'e* Mapula loves to listen to the country music of Dolly Parton.

10. a. *'M'e* MaBereng is a poor woman. She lives with her family in a small *rondavel* with earth floor and walls. She doesn't have any running water.
    b. *'M'e* MaBereng warms water on the fire to give each of her children a complete bucket bath every day. She makes sure their clothes are freshly cleaned and pressed before they attend church on Sunday.

The Mosotho Child Today

Special thanks to Mr. Patrick Bereng for allowing us to print this excerpt from his essay, "The Mosotho Child Today," which appears in his book, *I Am a Mosotho*.

Grace, like most of the girls you meet in town, was born and brought up in a village. She came to Maseru, the capital of Lesotho, to work after completing her studies. Her mother from the village is visiting her in order to get the part of her salary that Grace gives to parents monthly to support and help them. Even to this day, modern people have not changed much when it comes to their responsibility of maintaining their aging parents. The family has not been destroyed. What is strange to parents today is the way sons and daughters lead their lives.

In other words, the family is still very much together materially and emotionally although parents and children have started to differ extremely when it comes to the definition of the meaning and purposes of life.

On Friday evening, Grace tells her mother that she will be going out that night with her boyfriend [*to a discotheque*]. . . .

"Who is this boyfriend? How dare a mouse accompany a cat in a leisurely stroll? This is impossible, I cannot believe my ears," the mother thinks. . . .

This going out with boyfriends, openly, especially at night, is a new development. . . . Grace knows well that in the village, where her father lives, she should never dare announce her intention to go out with a boyfriend. . . . However, wherever electric lights shine, the area is contaminated with a foreign epidemic or culture.

Most of these young people were born in the village and share meaning with their country folks while, on the other hand, they regard themselves modern for practising the "electric culture."

. . . We ponder these things in order to point out that Grace lives two different types of life. On the one hand, she is Mosotho girl who dare not invite a boyfriend into the parent's house unless and until his intention to marry her has been announced by his parents to hers. . . . On the other hand, Grace lives in Maseru by herself, away from the control of her parents. This gives her the opportunity "to do her thing" without any sanction. In the village Grace is a Mosotho, and in the town she is but a young European girl, and enjoys the so-called "freedom rights."

In town, boyfriends visit her in her house, go to night-club with her and today she tells her mother that she will be going to a discotheque with a boyfriend. In the first place, the mother does not understand what a discotheque is; she is, however, expected by her daughter to move with the times and stop complaining about the daughter mixing too much with boys. . . . All the same, she sees no justification for night parties, where girls spend the night in the company of boys with no responsible elderly people guarding against misbehaviour. . . .

From *I Am a Mosotho*, Second Edition, P. Bereng, Morija, Lesotho, 1987. Adapted and reprinted with permission.

How I Would Change My Education

These two essay excerpts first appeared in the Lesotho newsletter, Work for Justice, which asked Basotho high school students to submit opinions on how they would change their education, if they could.

Puleng Botsane from St. Catherine's High School in Maseru had this to say:

The education that we have now is more academic than practical. . . . When a person finishes school, he doesn't know anything about practical work. Very few people can get reasonable employment these days without a profession. I think if introduction to computers could be done in high schools, it would improve the situation. . . . It is because I have seen that wherever a person goes . . . the knowledge of computers and secretarial work are needed very, very much.

Hygiene must also be taught in all high schools. . . . Children must know the causative agent of each disease and how it is transmitted and how we could prevent ourselves from getting it. Nowadays there is the problem of AIDS, and teenagers are in great risk of AIDS. . . .

While the purely academic subjects must continue, more practical subjects related closely to our social environment must be made part of our education. The reality is that we cannot all get white-collar jobs, which our present education prepares us for.

Joseph Monaheng Seitlheko from St. Stephen's High School in Mohale's Hoek adds his views to the debate:

I think there is still a need to look back where we come from . . . and take another hard look at our western education in contrast to our traditional one.

Inasmuch as science and maths are concerned, I always see disaster and terrible failure in many of us because we have the feeling that these two are difficult and complicated. . . . Those of us who are victims of this inheritance from the past or failure to understand the subjects can be better off if we can be given a break from this, and [study] new subjects like commerce (accounting), art, law studies and music lessons.

If I were to choose, I would go for what I truly like to be taught, not what syllabus and examiners expect of us.

Apart from tastes and likes, I have a feeling that we do have in this small country potential and talented artists, writers, musicians and lawyers who are not given a chance to prove their ability.

I would encourage or suggest international relationship in sports and education. I mean playing football, tennis, volleyball, softball, and whatever together in our respective countries, and about education I mean debating with each other on a given topic so as to compete with and have a glance at other people's way of life, thinking and expression.

Adapted from "Education for Change," Work for Justice, No. 20 (December 1988).
Reprint with acknowledgment.

Life Without Education

Here are interviews with two young men from Lesotho who have been unable to pursue a formal education. Their comments originally appeared in the Lesotho newsletter, Work for Justice.

Seabuti Buti is 20 years old. He attended school at Ha Mosalla in Thaba Bosiu, his home village. His father passed away in 1976 and he and his six brothers and a sister are looked after and brought up by their uncle. They depend for their living on two fields, because their mother does not a have a job that can bring monthly income.

Work For Justice *met Seabata at his uncle's cafè, where he was doing piece jobs. He was very shy, very unsure of himself. After we had obtained permission from his uncle to interview him, we found that he had disappeared. It took us several minutes to find him again, because apparently he was afraid or ashamed to tell his story. We persuaded him that it is important that he let others know his plight, so that other young people might avoid these difficulties. Here is his story.*

I was forced to leave school while in Standard 6. I did not continue with my education, because my mother could not afford to pay school fees. At present only my sister is attending school. She is in Standard 5. My eldest brother is married, and the next ones are still staying at home with my mother.

I still want to go back to school because only educated people have better chances to get a job. If I am educated and trained, I can be able to contribute to the development of my country.

Life is really hard on my side, and I do not like the way I am living, because I cannot determine my future. I am staying with my uncle and he gives me whatever job is available. I look after cattle, I go to the fields to plough, or I clean the business premises. In return, he gives me what he feels is necessary.

My advice to those who are unfortunate like me is that they should try to get a job, and not sit around or loiter in the streets. I advise those who have chances for learning to work hard and learn as much as possible, because education is important.

Work for Justice *met Paskalis Majula in Maseru where he had come to try to find a job. He is an unmarried man in his late 20's. He does not know when he was born, and could not even make an estimate. He still had hope of getting a job, but was beginning to be discouraged, because his lack of education continually blocked him. Here is his story.*

My father and mother are still alive. We are five in the family, four boys and one girl. Only my sister has attended school. I was a herdboy when I was young, and so had no chance to go to school. At that time we had 20 cattle, 3 horses and 40 sheep. One of my older brothers has a job in Lesotho, and the other is working in the mines. The youngest brother is still at home, where he hopes to learn to drive. Our father has never said anything to any of us about attending school.

Even though I am older now, I would still like to sell a cow and go to school if I had the chance. It is very difficult for me now, since I cannot get work without an education. I feel that education is the most important and powerful thing one can do in life, because then one can approach life with a clear light. A person like myself who has never attended school will depend on casual work all his life, and will remain a servant of those who are privileged to have gotten a good education. In short, let me say that a person who is educated or who can at least read and write is better off these days.

Adapted from "Education for Change," Work for Justice, No. 20 (December 1988).
Reprint with acknowledgment.

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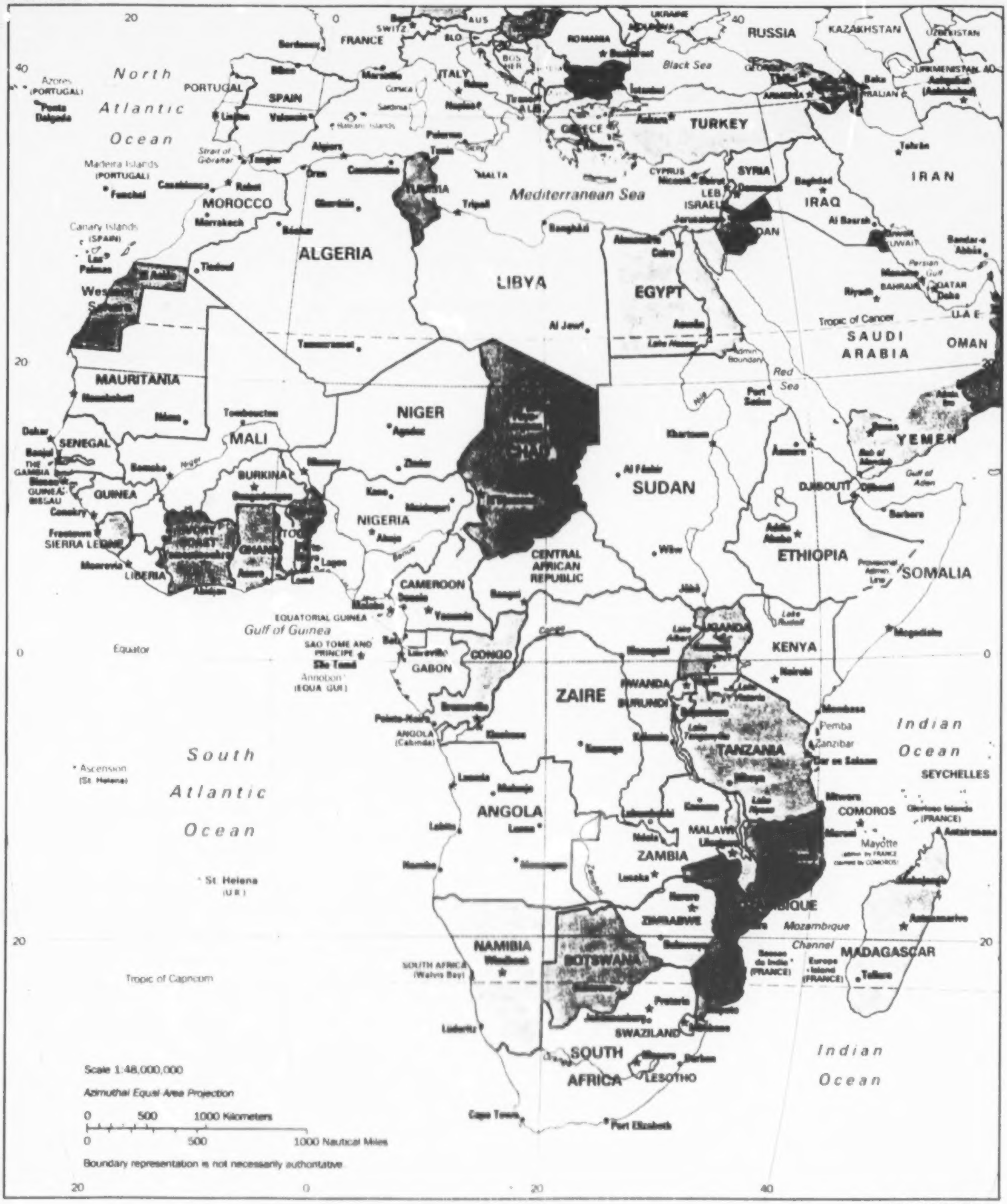
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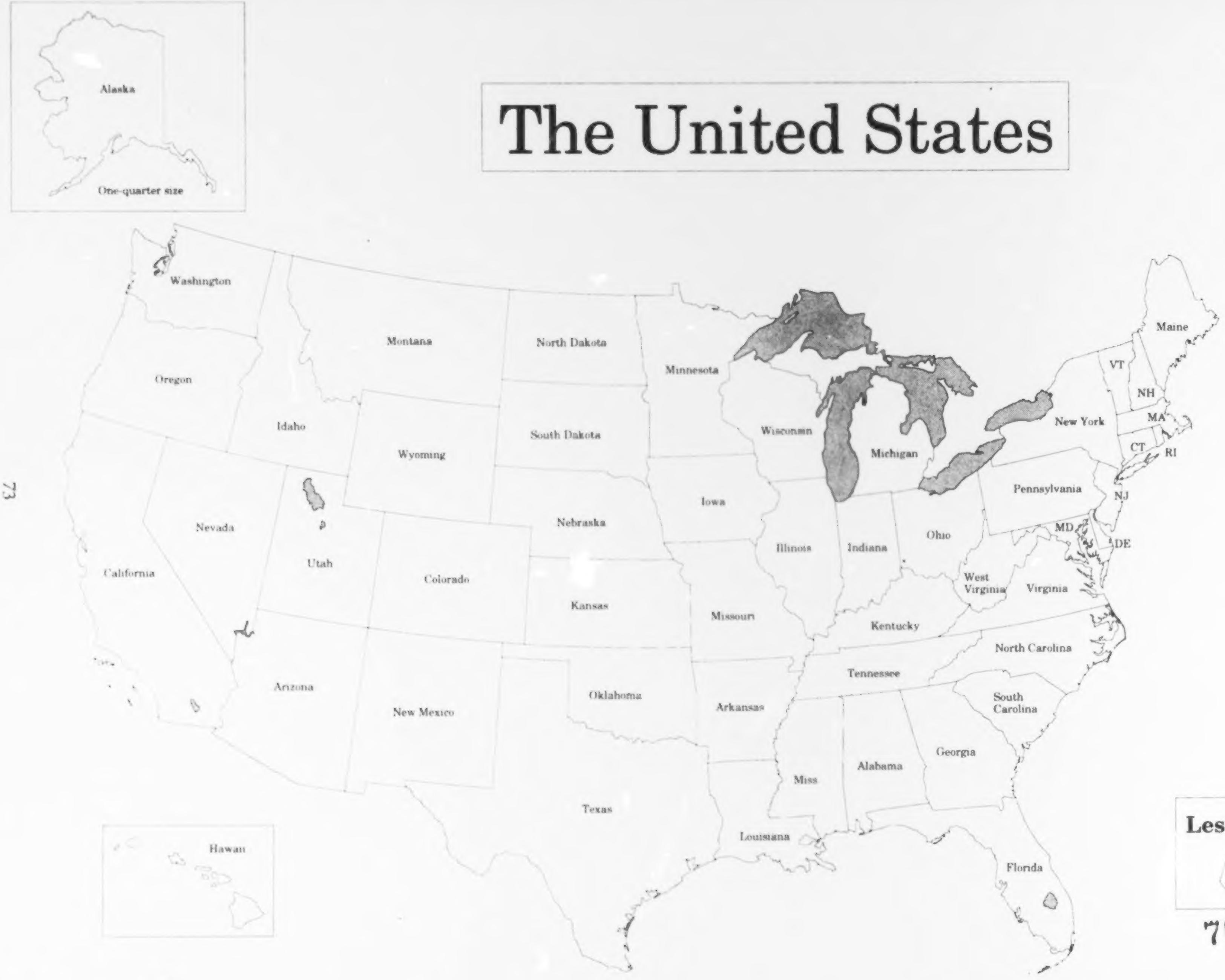
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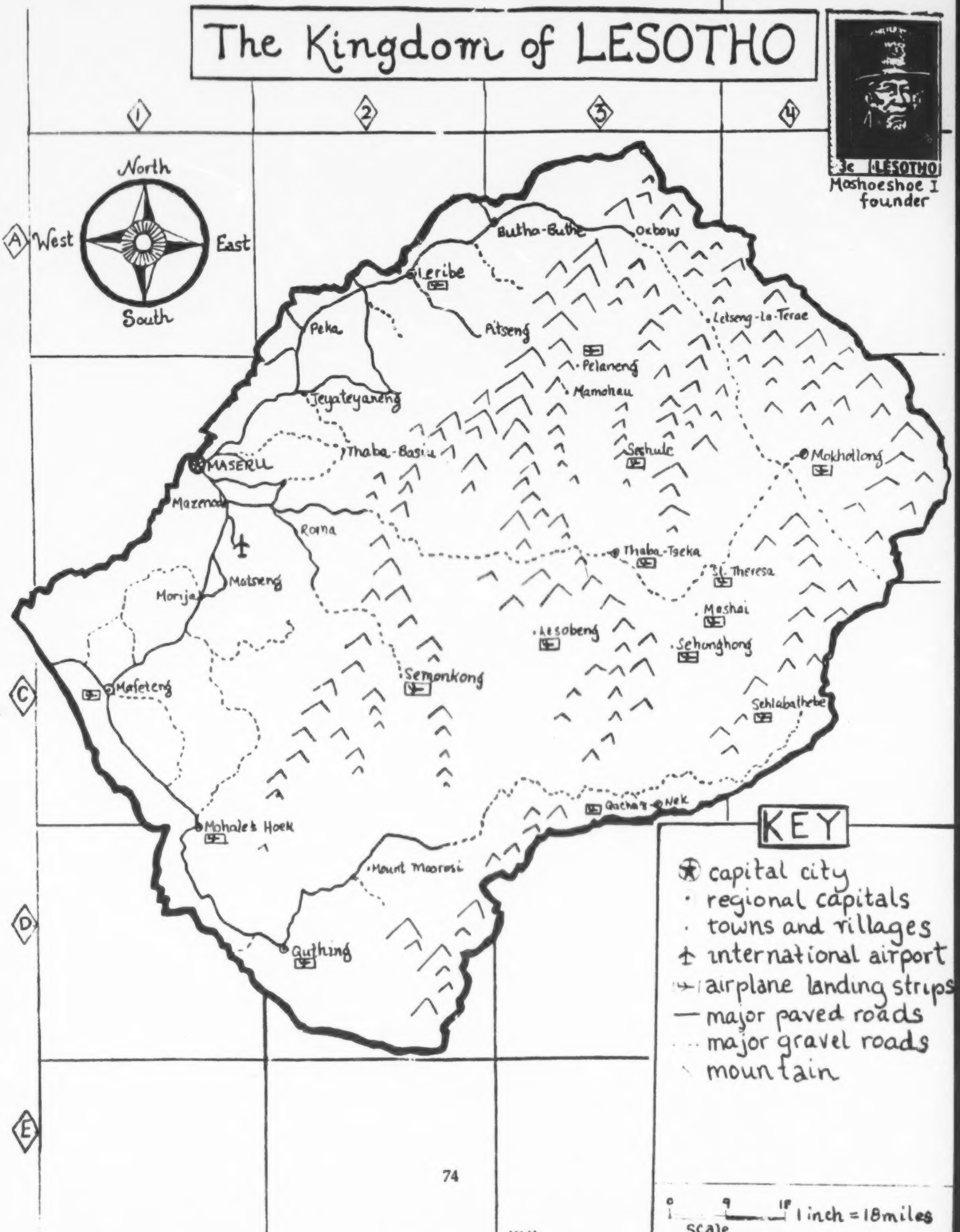
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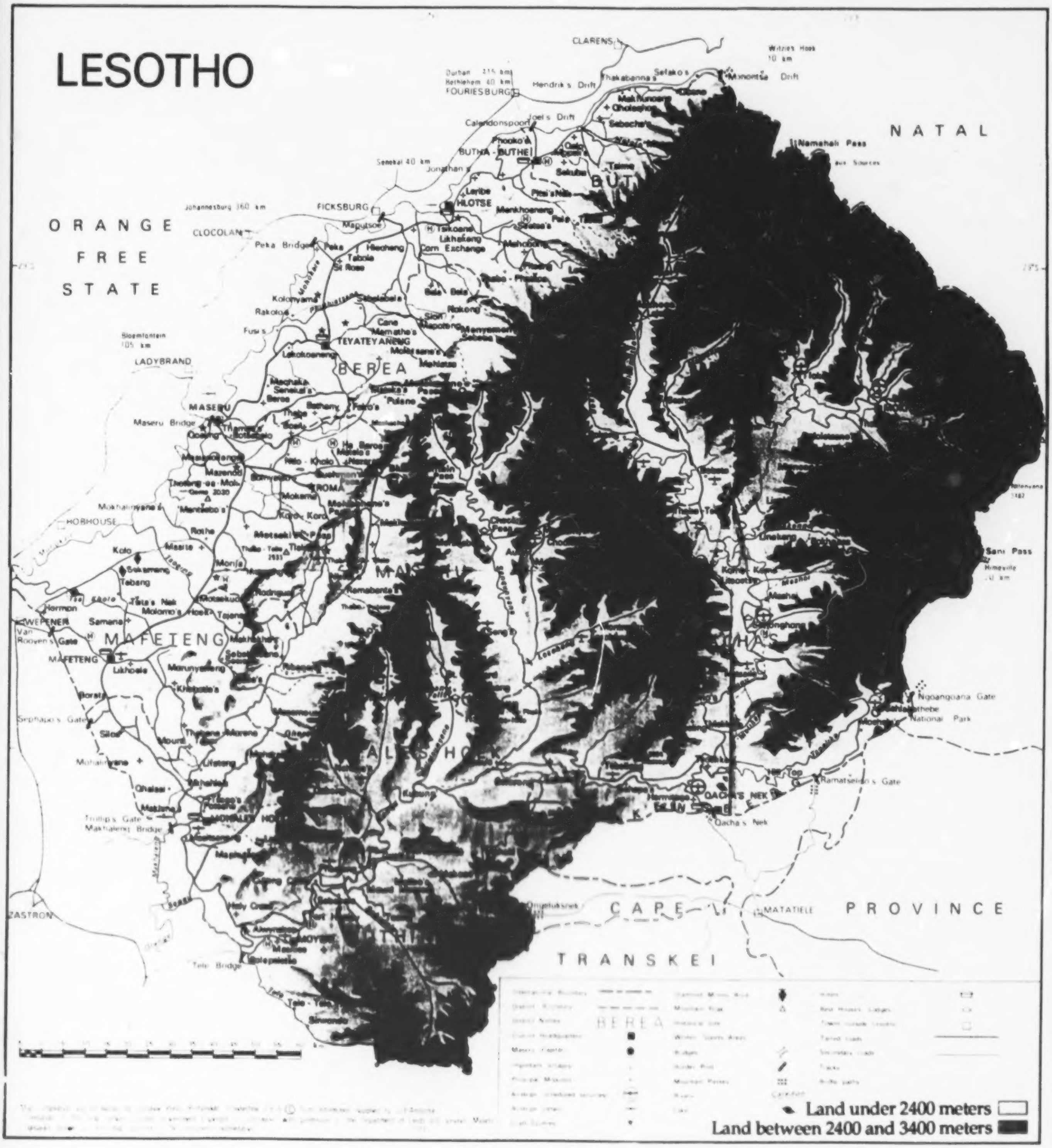
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Hendrik's Drift
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Land between 2400 and 3400 meters ■

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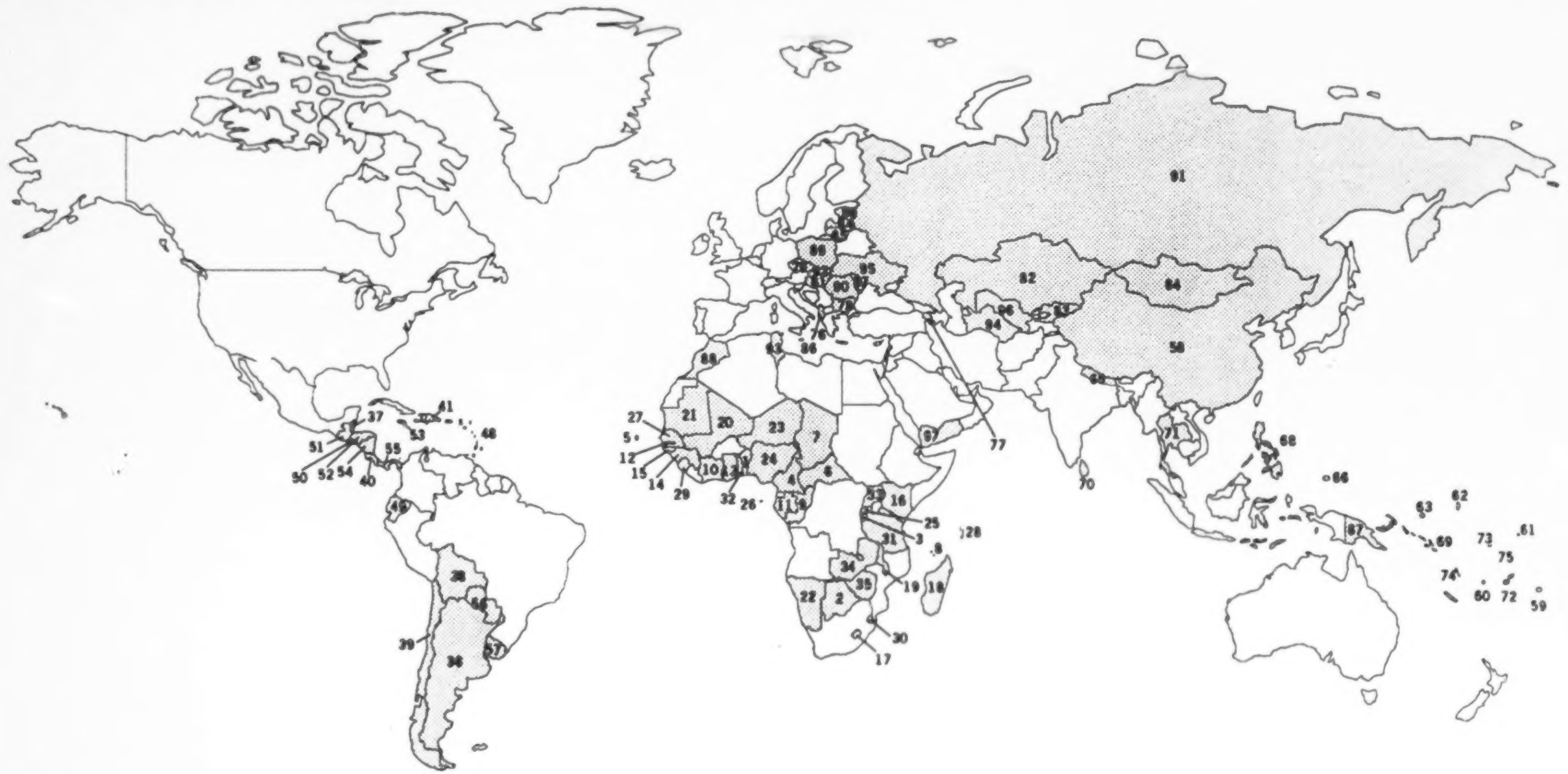
Peace Corps Volunteers Serve Around the Globe



AFRICA

Benin—1
Botswana—2
Burundi—3
Cameroon—4
Cape Verde—5
Central African Rep.—6
Chad—7
Comoros—8
Congo—9
Côte d'Ivoire—10
Gabon—11
The Gambia—12
Ghana—13
Guinea—14
Guinea Bissau—15
Kenya—16
Lesotho—17
Madagascar—18
Malawi—19
Mali—20
Mauritania—21
Namibia—22
Niger—23
Nigeria—24
Rwanda—25
São Tomé & Príncipe—26
Senegal—27
Seychelles—28
Sierra Leone—29
Swaziland—30
Tanzania—31
Togo—32
Uganda—33
Zambia—34
Zimbabwe—35

INTER-AMERICA

Argentina—36
Belize—37
Bolivia—38
Chile—39
Costa Rica—40
Dominican Rep.—41
Eastern Caribbean—48
- Antigua/Barbuda
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Montserrat
- St. Kitts/Nevis
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent & Grenadines

Ecuador—49
El Salvador—50
Guatemala—51
Honduras—52
Jamaica—53
Nicaragua—54
Panama—55
Paraguay—56
Uruguay—57

ASIA & PACIFIC

China—58
Cook Islands—59
Fiji—60
Kiribati—61
Marshall Islands—62
Micronesia—63
Mongolia—64
Nepal—65
Palau—66
Papua New Guinea—67
Philippines—68
Solomon Islands—69
Sri Lanka—70
Thailand—71
Tonga—72
Tuvalu—73
Vanuatu—74
Western Samoa—75

EURASIA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Albania—76
Armenia—77
Bulgaria—78
Czech Rep.—79
Estonia—80
Hungary—81
Kazakhstan—82
Kyrghyzstan—83
Latvia—84
Lithuania—85
Malta—86
Moldova—87
Morocco—88
Poland—89
Romania—90
Russia—91
Slovak Rep.—92
Tunisia—93
Turkmenistan—94
Ukraine—95
Uzbekistan—96
Yemen—97

Some countries may be in development or temporarily suspended. 4/93

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